

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES

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COMMENT

THE main article in HORIZON this month is by Dwight Macdonald, the editor of *Partisan Review*, from which it is reprinted. We have made use of the article not because we agree with all of it, but to draw attention to the false impression of America which is created by the ban on the import into this country of American magazines. How many people here know that Americans are expressing such detailed and documented criticism of their own policy? How many have read Winter's moving article in the *New Republic* on the Detroit Race Riots? How much happier we would feel about Anglo-American relations if we knew how closely the two countries resembled each other in their free expressions of democratic self-criticism and minority reports! But we do not know because we know nothing of the American Press except what we glean from the cables of a few English correspondents, and in both countries we are becoming so nationalistic that we lose touch with the common language of Liberal internationalism which still exists. The ban on the import of American magazines into this country is not political: it is as impossible to get the *New Yorker* as it is to get the *New Republic*, for the ban is a consequence of the dollar-pound situation and, to a lesser extent, of shipping space. But magazines take up very little room and very little money. It is absurd that we should know less about America as an ally than we did as a neutral, and the more we know of the minority opinions and intellectual speculations of the U.S.A. the more we recognize its kinship with ourselves and the less prone we become to fear—and therefore to hate, envy, and misrepresent—our colossal neighbour. We import American tobacco, so let us have *Life* and the *New Yorker*, the *Nation* and the *New Republic*, *Harper's* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Partisan Review*, *View* and *Triple V*. Let us have some American magazines! From the Continent the prospects are brighter. HORIZON hopes soon to be able to distribute the review *Fontaine*, which is our European counterpart and which is able to obtain the services of many of the leading writers in France. We also understand that the *Cahiers du Silence* are going to distribute in this country copies of the anonymous clandestine review *Cahier de la Liberation* which is succeeding the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. That once glorious periodical has come to a collaborationist's end, for all the subscribers have cancelled their subscriptions.

MARCUS ADENEY
FOR HENRY JAMES

We had come a long way over rough roads
Restless, our rations and our faith divided,
No starry project destined or decided,
Our camels borrowed with their stranger loads—
To find the priceless ivory of your towers.
Firelit before the creeping cliffs of night.
We boiled our water, dressed our fears in white,
Then waited for your words to sound the hours.
But only silence troubled the long shades;
And fortune's favour, riding neatly by,
Filled a brief air-space with conceited aides.
We may look past them now to a clear sky,
Where in the otherness of your intent
The lost years say what they have always meant.

E. L. T. MESENS
POÈME DE GUERRE
À ANDRÉ BRETON

Je suis né le vingt-sept novembre mil neuf cent trois
Sans dieu sans maître sans roi ET SANS DROITS

*A perte de vue
La misère humaine
A perte de vue
Les toits les maisons
A perte de vue
Les robes à traîne
Académies
Société des Nations*

Armé de pied en cap
Pour chasser le dragon:
Un savon pour la barbe
Un blaireau
Un rasoir de sûreté
Dix lames
Un gant de toilette
Un savon
Une bouteille de lotion
Un peigne
Une brosse à dents
Une lime à ongles

Je passais les frontières aux couleurs sans danger

*A perte de vue
La misère humaine
A perte de vue
Les toits les maisons
A perte de vue
Les robes à traîne
Académies
Société des Nations*

Soudain une bombe éclate
Suivie d'un long ennui
Les robes à traîne
Les toits les maisons
Le nuit se démène
—Bonsoir, Monsieur Dragon!

★ ★ ★

C'est la guerre
Poussière poussière dans les escaliers

Dans le silence
La lune fait briller mes armes:
Un savon pour fausses barbes
Un blaireau en poils de cochon
Un rasoir de sûreté pour noyés
Dix lames de fond
Un gant de toilette en velours
Un savon noir
Une bouteille de lotion 'Mandragore'
Un peigne cosmique
Une brosse à dents en or fin
Une lime à ongles phosphorescente
Pour ne pas oublier la nuit
La nuit totale
La nuit des loups
Où seuls les chiens se mordent
La nuit cynique
Nuit chuchotante . . .

*A perte de vue
La misère humaine
A perte de vue
Les toits les maisons
A perte de vue
Les robes à traîne
Académies
Société des Nations.*

London, 25 septembre 1942

DWIGHT MACDONALD

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES¹

I

AT the beginning of *La Chartreuse de Parme*, Stendhal has a memorable description of the liberation of Milan from Austrian rule. It is 1796, and the young Bonaparte, fresh from the brilliant victory at the Bridge of Lodi, has entered the city at the head of his revolutionary army 'which, having just won six battles and conquered twenty provinces, was fully equipped except for shoes, trousers, coats and hats':

'At once a new and passionate social atmosphere materialized. An entire people realized on the fifteenth of May, 1796, that everything they had respected until then was utterly absurd, if not downright hateful. The withdrawal of the last Austrian regiment marked the downfall of the old ideas; to risk one's life became fashionable. Everyone began to live only to be happy after centuries of hypocrisy and dulness, every one felt he must love something passionately and be prepared to risk his neck for it. The interminable, suspicious despotism of Charles V and Philip II had plunged the Lombards in deepest night; now their statues were overturned and suddenly everything was flooded with light. For half a century, while the Encyclopedists and Voltaire had been enlightening France, the monks had dinned it into the good people of Milan that to learn to read or any other worldly pursuit was useless bother, and that if one paid one's tithes punctually to the priest and confessed one's little sins, one was practically sure to go to heaven . . . The exaltation was so excessive and widespread that I can explain it only by this profound historical reflection: these people had been bored for a century.'

So it was in the springtime of the bourgeois revolution. Last fall another army arrived in another land ruled by reaction. For the victory at Lodi, the deal with Darlan. For the ragged regiments

¹ Last of a series of articles on 'The New Failure of Nerve,' in *Partisan Review*.

commanded by a twenty-seven year old genius, the vast fleets bearing a formidably equipped host commanded by generals, neither young nor geniuses. For the fresh breeze of freedom, the perpetuation of the stale atmosphere of Vichy. When Bonaparte entered Milan in 1796, the Marquis del Dongo fled to his country estate; when Eisenhower entered Algiers in 1942, the men of Vichy entertained his officers at their clubs. Bonaparte brought along a young artist who gave the delighted Milanese the first political cartoon they had ever seen: a drawing of a French soldier slitting the belly of a rich landowner, from which poured not blood but wheat. Eisenhower brought along Col. Darryl F. Zanuck, late of Hollywood. Eisenhower's army was as 'non-political'—in the sense that the reactionary anti-Semite, Giraud, is non-political—as Bonaparte's was political. One might have expected an army of the Four Freedoms to begin with the liberation of the native population. But Eisenhower's first communiqué states: 'The forces under my command bring with them a solemn assurance that the French North African Empire will remain French.' His subordinate, General Patton, defined the modest aim of the American forces as the maintenance of 'political as well as economic normality' in North Africa. Rarely before in history has so vast a physical force been deployed with such tragically—or comically, perhaps—small political results.

It is ironical that the first great American military venture in the war, a coup hailed by the liberals at the time as a 'turning-point', should have proven to be such indeed, but a turning away from their values. What the French collapse of 1940 revealed about European bourgeois democracy, the North African campaign revealed about its American counterpart.

When I wrote 'The (American) People's Century' last summer, there was still a good deal of illusion about the democratic war aims. In the year since then, however, the positive idealism which was dominant in the first part of the war, as expressed in the Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter, and Wallace's 'People's Revolution' speeches, has been superseded by a new line. As military victory comes closer, the philanthropic slogans can be honourably discharged: they have done their 'bit', or tried to, and might prove embarrassing if permitted to survive into the peace-conference stage. There is also a broader consideration: the antagonism between actual policies and formal

B

principles has become too acute to be bridged by even the most powerful propaganda. In England since last summer, the Tories have so consolidated their control of the Government that the Labour Party ministers dare not support the Beveridge Plan; Cripps has been squeezed dry and thrown aside; Gandhi has been jailed and the Congress Party has been temporarily defeated. In this country, the fall elections returned the most conservative Congress since 1933; the new taxes are regressive, food prices rise sharply, wages are frozen, profits enormous; the unions have become instruments of Governmental control, and the Administration and Congress are using the mine strike as an occasion for still further weakening labour; the Negroes are jimcrowed as much as ever in military and civilian life; big business is more powerful than ever, and its representatives have excluded almost completely both labour men and New Dealers from the policy-making level of the war agencies; foreign policy has been increasingly determined by the reactionary State Department. As a former radical leader remarked recently, 'This time we're getting the post-war disillusionment during the war'.

A nation fighting the kind of war the French Revolutionary armies fought, or the Red Army in 1919, does all it can to *politicalize* the struggle. It is notable that everything possible is done by our leaders to *de-politicalize* this war. As it grinds automatically on, as it spreads and becomes more violent, the conflict becomes less and less meaningful, a vast nightmare in which we are all involved and from which whatever hopes and illusions we may have had have by now leaked out. Some weeks ago, the Office of War Information issued directives to its propagandists on 'the nature of the enemy'. He was described as a bully, a murderer, a thief, a gangster, etc., but only once in the lengthy document as a *fascist*. Soviet Russia has never pretended to be fighting for any international socialist ideals, but simply for national survival—the 'Great Patriotic War', as the official slogan has it. The recent dissolution of the Comintern was Stalin's effort to wash his regime clean of even the smell of any general principles. With his usual cynical boldness, Dr. Goebbels expresses the new line: 'To date, from the national viewpoint, we have fought only for illusory objectives—for the House of Prussia, or Hapsburg; for socialism and for national socialism; for questions of proletariat or bourgeoisie.' But today it is for important things

we are fighting: for coal, for iron, for petroleum, and above all, for daily bread'. The German Army fights on because it is—an army. The people at home support the war—endure the war might be more accurate—because they rightly fear an even more terrible Versailles if the other side wins. The unreality of the 'Democracy-vs.-Slavery' propaganda of the United Nations is exposed by their inability to appeal politically to the masses of enslaved Nazi Europe. The best wisdom of our war leaders is that it will take x tons of bombs to reduce y acres of European cities to rubble.

The increasing *unconscious* character of the war—in the sense that the policies of the United Nations express no positive ideology or principles but merely an opportunistic adaptation to a reactionary *status quo*—coming as it does on top of twenty years of defeat of democratic and radical forces, has had its effect on American intellectual life. 'Le 2 décembre m'a physiquement dépolitiqué', wrote Baudelaire after Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*. 'Il n'y a plus d'idées générales . . . Si j'avais voté, je n'aurais pu voter que pour moi.'¹ 'There are no more general ideas'—what better describes the intellectual atmosphere today? Most political thinking has abandoned not only the old optimism of progress, but also the very notion of any consistent attempt to direct the evolution of society in a desirable direction. Submission to the brute force of events, choice between evils rather than between positive programmes, a scepticism about basic values and ultimate ends, a refusal to look too far ahead—this is the mood. But history evolves, the world changes in one direction or another, whether we dare to be conscious of it or not. What I want to do in this article, therefore, is to try to relate the values most of us hold to (1) the historical situation, and (2) current political programmes.

II

The system of values which has been slowly, painfully built up since the end of the Middle Ages, and which has commanded

¹ I owe this quotation to Meyer Schapiro's 'Courbet and Popular Imagery' (*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 4, Nos. 3 & 4, 1941) which is in part a study of the effect of 1848 on French writers and artists. It is remarkable, by the way, how many of the issues of this period (and the intellectual reactions to them) anticipate those of our own time.

general assent since the eighteenth century, is today threatened as never before. These values, which achieved political reality in the American and French revolutions, are crystallized around the free development of the individual. I would roughly summarize them—and the concepts which are organically linked with them—as follows:

‘**MATERIALISM:** The substitution of this-worldly for other-worldly criteria in all fields. Man is the measure of all values, and his happiness and self-fulfilment here on earth the aim and justification of all institutions. Reason and science are substituted for traditional or mystical modes of thought.

‘**HUMAN NATURE:** Man is by nature perfectible and has been corrupted by bad institutions. Good institutions will permit the individual to develop his human potentialities. From this optimistic view of human nature flow two related beliefs: (a) *Fraternity*, all men are brothers, wars are stupid and immoral; (b) *Education as a Panacea*, if man is corrupted only by his environment, it follows he will be able to progress if he is taught the truth.

‘**DEMOCRACY:** The State exists for man, not vice versa. “Man” means the majority of citizens. Jefferson wonderfully summarizes the theory in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, [deriving their powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government] . . .”¹

‘**PROGRESS:** There is a pattern in history, and it is a progressive, not a cyclical pattern. This progress, which is thought of as materialistic, is desirable: it is good in itself to produce more,

¹ The words in brackets are omitted from this passage as it is inscribed on the walls of the recently opened Jefferson Memorial in Washington. The omission—they had to break a sentence in the middle to do it—is a commentary on what has happened to the values of 1776 in this age. As is, for that matter, the whole pompous, costly and tasteless Memorial, more suitable to one of the late Roman Emperors than to our greatest revolutionary democrat.

to extend man's mastery over nature. The process is also inevitable: man is able to solve problems, to advance towards a better life.'

These were the values of the revolutionary wing of eighteenth-century political thought—Rousseau, Paine, Jefferson, Robespierre. The conservative wing—Locke, Montesquieu, the American Constitutionalists—differed only on Democracy, being distrustful of majority-rule and preferring oligarchy. It was the revolutionary ideology which won out, and which still dominates our culture—in a more sophisticated and less naïvely optimistic form, of course. The neo-conservatives of our time, in attempting to revive the doctrines of Adams and Locke, exaggerate the differences between the two wings. Because they themselves reject the propositions on Materialism, Human Nature and Progress, they pretend there was a split all along the line in the eighteenth century. The actual situation is revealed in Randall's *The Making of the Modern Mind*:

'From the beginning of the century onward there rose one increasing pæan to progress through education. Locke, Helvetius and Bentham laid the foundations for this generous dream; all men of whatever school, save only those who clung like Malthus to the Christian doctrine of original sin, believed with all their ardent natures in the perfectibility of the human race. At last mankind held in its own hands the key to its destiny; it could make the future almost what it would. By destroying the foolish errors of the past and returning to a rational cultivation of nature, there were scarcely any limits to human welfare that might not be transcended.'

What has happened is that the above values have come into conflict with the actual development of capitalism, and, as always, it is the values and not the productive system which are giving way. Worse, those developments which had seemed to be steps towards the realization of these values appear today as their executioners. The great liberating power of the last two centuries, the growth of the forces of production, which turned men's eyes from heaven to earth and created the material plenty out of which a humanistic culture and ethics could grow, this has now become, by a dialectical turn, the new enslaver. Man has learned to master nature so well that we use the most advanced technology to blast to bits the fabric of culture. Art museums, hospitals, vast

industrial works, ancient churches and modernistic housing projects, whole historic cities like Warsaw, Coventry, Cologne, and Nuremberg—all are being destroyed with the most admirable efficiency week after week, month after month. Everyone can read and write, popular education is a reality—and so the American masses read pulp fiction and listen to soap operas on that triumph of technology, the radio, and the German and Russian masses are the more easily indoctrinated with a lying and debased official culture. The freeing of man to develop himself has had the effects which Erich Fromm described in *Escape from Freedom*: craving to be rid of this empty 'freedom', the masses turn neurotically to totalitarian Leaders. The struggle for universal suffrage is won, and the result is the rise of plebescitary dictatorships, in which the State authority becomes sacred precisely because it claims to represent 'the People' against the individual. Far from decreasing in power, as all progressive thinkers from Jefferson to Marx and Lenin hoped and believed it would, the State is becoming an end in itself, subjugating the human being as the Church did in the Middle Ages. In the new religion of the State, which has reached full growth in Germany and Russia and which is steadily growing here, the individual is once more frozen into the hierarchical, irrational pattern of a society based on status. The peoples of the world are being organized into vast power-States, military-socialist in form, which are devastating the globe in their internecine struggles.

III

It is natural there should be a 'new failure of nerve' in the face of such a situation. The bourgeois revolution has reached a dead end. Regression is manifest everywhere, culture goes obscurantist, politics become more and more totalitarian. There is a general retreat from the one basic philosophy and programme which both explains what has happened to the bourgeois revolutionary values and also opens up a road forward to their fulfilment. 'In its theoretical form,' writes Engels, 'modern socialism originally appears as a further and ostensibly more logical extension of the principles established by the great French philosophers of the eighteenth century. Like every new theory, it had at first to link itself on to the intellectual material which lay ready to its hand, however deep its roots lay in economic facts.' (*Anti-Duhring*,

p. 23.) Historically, Marxism is the continuation of the values of the bourgeois revolution, on which it drew for its sources of theory: English classical economics, French political theory, and Hegelian philosophy.¹ Marx and Engels quarrelled not at all with the values of 1776 and 1789, but only with the failure to realize them. Much is written today, often by those who should know better, about Marxism as a doctrine of dictatorship, an inhumanly reductive system. But what impresses me is precisely Marx's concern with human values, his instinct for the human 'point' of political and economic questions, as in such key concepts as the fetishism of commodities and the alienation of the worker from his work under capitalism. In substituting the working-class for the bourgeoisie, historical materialism for the naïve idealism of the eighteenth century, they were seeking the forces to carry to completion the aspirations of the Enlightenment. Their aim could have been subscribed to by Jefferson: a society 'in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'.

The modifications Marx made in the conceptions of the Eighteenth Century about human nature, democracy and progress were all in the direction of greater realism and sophistication. It is remarkable how often his analysis of human motivation anticipates Freud, for example. Most modern historians of significance, from Pirenne and Sombart to Beard, follow the materialistic interpretation first worked out by Marx. We live in pretty much the kind of world Marx and Engels thought we should be living in, failing socialist revolution: a world of wars, crises, mass unemployment, centralized power and general instability. The way the classic bourgeois values have today produced their very opposite does not mean they should now be abandoned, as the obscurantists claim. It is rather a tribute to the soundness of Marx's much-abused dialectical conception of history. Nor should one forget that Marx made his predictions at

¹ 'Marx, then, in developing his new socialist and proletarian science,' writes Karl Korsch in his valuable little book on Marx, 'took his cue from that early study of society which, although first communicated to him by Hegel, had really been born of the revolutionary epoch of the bourgeoisie.' The testimony of the modern obscurantists is also impressive: to writers like Drucker and Barzun, Marx is the anti-Christ, most wicked and potent of the followers of Rousseau, and the link between the French revolution and both fascism and Stalinism.

a time when almost all other social thinkers entertained the most absurd optimism as to the longevity, in fact the eternity of capitalism.

As anyone knows who follows even superficially the work being done today in economics, sociology and political science, Marxism is still very much a force to be reckoned with in those fields. Last year, for example, Joan Robinson, second only to Keynes himself among Keynesian economists, published her *Essay on Marxian Economics*, which is all the more impressive as a critical tribute because of her basic political disagreement. Marxism is far from dead, despite the obituaries constantly being printed—so constantly, in fact, as to attest to the liveliness of the corpse!¹

But something has obviously gone wrong with the Marxist scheme of things so far as progress towards socialism is concerned. Two passages will perhaps indicate what it is:

‘The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has grown up and flourished along with it, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated. (*Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 836–7.)

‘III. *Proletarian revolution*—solution of the contradictions. The proletariat seizes the public power . . . Socialized production upon a pre-determined plan becomes henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the State dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organization, becomes at the same time the lord over nature, his own master—free. To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat.’ (Engels: *Socialism, Scientific & Utopian*, pp. 74–5.)

The first prophecy is being fulfilled. The incompatibility of

¹ There is an interesting split today between the economists and sociologists, who seem to be becoming more interested in Marxism, and the philosophical-literary intellectuals, who were originally attracted to Marxism for political reasons and who are now repudiating it for the same reasons. This is part of a broader split, in which the intellectuals, disillusioned by Stalinism and the decline of the Left, are turning from politics, while the economists and sociologists are growing more political.

private property forms with modern mass production has reached the point that everywhere private capitalism is dying, collective economics is advancing, planning is replacing the anarchy of the market, the bourgeoisie is being expropriated. The contradiction between the expansion of productive power and the restriction of the effective market has become so acute that the system simply cannot hold together without more and more intervention from the State. The present war, which is itself largely the result of this contradiction, has speeded up the collectivizing process in England and America, and in Germany has carried it so far as to produce a non-capitalist society.

The second prophecy, on the other hand, is far from fulfilment. For the expropriators of the bourgeoisie are not the working-class, but a new political bureaucracy. Hence we see collectivized—or 'statified'—economy coming about not only without that political democracy Marx expected to accompany it, but even with a lessening of the degree of democracy characteristic of capitalism. Far from the State dying out and man becoming free 'as anarchy in social production vanishes', the State is omnipotent and man enslaved in direct proportion to the degree of collectivization. The first successful working-class socialist revolution has degenerated into a totalitarian system whose control over the thoughts and actions of the people is more complete than anything known in history. And this system was erected by Stalin on the foundation of collectivized property laid by the 1917 revolution—not, as Trotsky, misled by the mechanical application of Marxism, expected it to be, on the *ruins* of collectivized property.

One cannot deny that this evolution was not anticipated by Marx and Engels, nor that it requires great changes in traditional Marxist thinking. We must, first of all, face the fact that the working-class has so far, despite some excellent opportunities, proven unable to take and hold power anywhere, and that the rise of Stalinism and Fascism is primarily due to this failure. From the degeneration of the 1917 revolution we must conclude that collectivism is a necessary condition for socialism but not a guarantee of it; that certain sacrifices of democracy made by the Bolsheviks in the early years of the revolution facilitated the transition to Stalinism; and that in general means must be related more closely to ends, and problems of democratic organization *within and between working-class groups* considered as seriously as

problems of class warfare and economic change. From the transition from bourgeois private capitalism to bureaucratic collectivism which is taking place *without socialist intervention* throughout the world, we must conclude that once capitalism has reached a certain stage of decay it will not automatically be succeeded by socialism, but that if the working-class is unable to resolve the crisis *its* way, the bourgeoisie will resolve it *its* way: through the milder forms of State intervention at first, through fascism ultimately and their own elimination as a ruling class.

In a word, we can no longer believe in the inevitability of socialism. This weakens Marxism propagandistically, but strengthens it scientifically. In collectivism there are possibilities of both desirable, from my viewpoint, and undesirable kinds of social systems. The mystique of inevitability can be removed from Marxism without injuring—quite the contrary, in fact—the basic insights of Marxism: that class struggle is the underlying pattern of history; that men act primarily from materialistic, ‘selfish’ interests; that the development of the forces of production sets certain limits and offers certain possibilities to political action.¹ Nor should we forget that the ‘point’ of Marxism, as developed by Marx at least, was not economic determinism but rather political activism, as expressed in his famous epigram: ‘The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it’.

These are the conclusions I should draw from the course of history since the last war. They are very modest compared to those now being drawn by others, whose various political positions are based on the assumption, conscious or not, that democratic socialism is a dream, the working-class has shot its bolt, and the present social systems, on our side of the battle-lines at least, capable of indefinite survival. It is time to look at these positions.

¹ This is not inconsistent with the criticism above of Marxism for its failure to foresee the evolution of *totalitarian* collectivism, for this was an error in *judgment*, due to Marx’s habitual over-optimism and over-confidence in the working class—a defect one finds in all great revolutionaries. It was not a defect of Marx’s *system*, since the rise of collectivism can be explained best by the necessities of organizing modern mass production, and the totalitarian form it has so far taken can be explained best by Marx’s theories of class struggle and exploitation.

IV

There would seem to be only two historically real positions to take at this time. (By 'historically real' I mean (a) reflecting the actual development of society, and (b) having some chance of realizing the values those who hold them want to see realized.) One is that of those who quite frankly favour the new totalitarian values. The other is that of those who hold to the old democratic values, and look to revolutionary socialism to realize them.

Neither is held by any significant number of American intellectuals today. There are developing, instead, four fairly well-defined positions, 'common to all being a rejection of revolutionary socialism in favour of supporting (and compromising with) various elements in the *status quo*.

There are, first of all, those religious obscurantists who conclude that since there is a historical connection between the evils of the present and the traditional democratic values, therefore we must go back to pre-bourgeois values. They have already been dealt with at length in this series, so I shall only note that in some ways they are the most logical of all. For if revolutionary socialism is the only road forward for democratic values, then if this road is rejected, it is logical also to reject those values. Or, put slightly differently, if one gives up one's socialist beliefs, one can only take a *tragic* view of the world today. Thus it is the religious thinkers who now show, in a subjective sense, the *least* failure of nerve, since they (like the fascists) dare to recognize the actual state of affairs and draw drastic conclusions from it.

The remaining three schools all accept the basic democratic values, and hope to preserve them by various non-revolutionary means. The *Totalitarian Liberals* simply insist that the present trend towards bureaucratic collectivism is a *fulfilment* of progressive ideals (except, of course, in the Axis nations!). The *Conventional Liberals* are disturbed by existing anti-democratic tendencies, have a vaguely socialist faith, but put off any action in order to give 'lesser evil' support to the present war. The *Conservative Liberals* see most clearly of the three groups the unpalatable reality of existing trends, but reject socialism as itself totalitarian, and hope to salvage the basic democratic values by a 'balanced' or 'mixed' society.

The best examples of *Totalitarian Liberalism* are to be found in the speeches of Vice-President Wallace, with their 'people's

revolution' mystique, and in such journals as *P.M.* (for all its splendid muck-raking) which are aggressively critical of bourgeois reaction and aggressively uncritical of the Roosevelt Administration and Stalinist Russia. Underlying this position is a Victorian 'optimism of progress' which is a regression like the obscurantists' revival of Original Sin, except in the opposite direction. Social progress is seen as the automatic, inevitable consequence of industrialization and the spread of education, and as little sensitivity is shown towards the quality of the political means taken to those ends as certain Marxists show towards the quality of the means taken to bring about collectivism. The present war is seen in positive terms as a 'revolutionary' war, a 'People's War', etc. The openly reactionary turn the war has taken has greatly reduced its influence at the moment. Its chief significance in the future will probably be to corral sincere but naïve liberals into uncritical support of Stalin's post-war policies.

The *Conventional Liberal* position as applied to this war is essentially an extension of the old Popular Front idea: to support democratic capitalism against fascism on the theory that once the fascist threat has been beaten off, the masses can then resume their struggle towards socialism. The German Social Democracy gave the tactic its first large-scale test, before the term 'Popular Front' was coined, when they tried to stave off Hitler by supporting Hindenburg and the Weimar Republic. Later tests were equally unsuccessful. What always seems to happen is that this policy is able to defend capitalism against the workers, but not against the fascists. In crisis periods like Germany in 1930-33, Spain in the Civil War, France in 1935-36, the *status quo* never remains stable but is overthrown from the Right if the Left withholds its fire.

The mistake the *Conventional Liberals* make is to look at politics in static terms. History is always moving in one direction or the other, and in wartime this motion is accelerated. The reactionary evolution of the war will proceed with increasing speed, as it has been doing in the past year, unless it is checked or reversed by some counter-movement of the working class and their allies. This counter-movement cannot be stimulated by supporting the present war, as the experience of the British and American labour movements to date has shown. Furthermore, also since politics are dynamic and not static, the process of fighting

the war as conducted by Roosevelt and Churchill is weakening the forces that will fight, after the war, for a progressive social order. In fact, it seems likely that the Conventional Liberals, from Sidney Hook on the left to Bruce Bliven on the right, will find themselves confronted with such a threat of domestic reaction, even after Hitler has been safely eliminated, that they will continue to rally to the 'lesser evil'. There is really no discernible end to this allegedly temporary tactic. If before the war it was proper to support the lesser evil of bourgeois democracy against fascism in Spain and France, if during the war it is proper to support the lesser evil of Roosevelt-Churchill against Hitler, after the war it seems almost certain there will be further crises, if not also wars, in which a similar choice can be made. But the Conventional Liberals look neither forward nor backward, but keep their eye on the ball: Beat Hitler! This is just as well for their peace of mind.

Since what I am trying to get at in this article is the relationship of basic values to the historical situation today, it does not seem necessary to criticize the Conventional Liberal position more fully. For it is an opportunist, hand-to-mouth affair, taking for granted its basic values, which are those of reformism-cum-ultimate-socialism, and putting off any action on them until the Greek kalends. I don't think socialist ideals can be kept in a state of suspended animation 'for the duration', and I fear that when Hitler is finally defeated and the working-class movement gets its famous 'breathing spell', it may have quietly expired from holding its breath so long.

V

The most interesting of these positions is *Conservative Liberalism*, a complex reaction to the failure of both the bourgeois and the proletarian revolutions to realize their aims. It holds fast to progressive *values*: materialism, irreligion, scientific method, free development of the individual. But it inverts the *concepts* with which these values are logically and historically linked, seeing human nature as evil, history as either cyclical or without pattern, democracy as unattainable under any circumstances, class rule as inevitable, and man helpless to make any major improvement in society through conscious effort. The fascist rejects both progressive values and concepts; the Marxist accepts both; each approach

is consistent in itself and a guide for action. The Conservative Liberal, attempting to combine progressive values and reactionary concepts, runs into paralysing contradictions in both his theory and his programme. But in this time of disillusion on the Left, his negativistic doctrines are enjoying considerable vogue.

The founding fathers of Conservative Liberalism were Mosca, Michels and Pareto.¹ Their most important work was done in the decades just before the last, and their freedom from the optimistic illusions of their period allowed them to foresee the catastrophes in store for bourgeois and socialist democracy. Michels' analysis of the political organization of pre-war Social Democracy is the definitive work in a field more important today than ever. Mosca and Pareto both developed some interesting theories about class rule and ideology, though Marx anticipated their basic conceptions. But their approach seems to me to be an emotional reaction (springing from disillusionment) against the aspirations of democratic ideology rather than what it claims to be: an application, for the first time, of scientific method to the field of politics.

Because the Enlightenment had naïve faith in 'human nature', the 'Machiavellians'—to use Burnham's convenient term—react with the assertion that human nature is something eternally fixed, with narrow limitations that cannot under any circumstances be overcome. To Rousseau's mysticism of optimism, they counterpose a mysticism of pessimism. This is a secular version of Original Sin, without the logic the conception has in religious doctrine. As Ruth Benedict indicated in an earlier article in this series, modern anthropology provides evidence that 'human nature' is neither 'Good' in the Noble-Savage sense nor 'Bad' in the Original-Sin sense, but rather capable of almost anything depending on environmental influences. 'Human Nature' is thus a historical, not a psychological, phenomenon, and there can be no 'iron law of oligarchy' *in general* but only, if at all, for the specific period and place—Europe at the turn of the century—

¹ James Burnham deals with their theories in his new book, *The Machiavellians* (John Day, \$2.50) which is the kind of popular summary of ideas that reminds one of dehydrated food: the juice and flavour as well as the water have been extracted. It manages to be both pedantic and superficial, and the reader interested in these theories will find an equivalent amount of the original texts more instructive and much more entertaining.

Michels was studying. Granted that the Enlightenment's optimism about man's nature, in the light of Freudian psychology, appears excessive today, it surely does not advance matters to react to the other extreme and assert an equally abstract conception. And at least the Enlightenment grasped the root of the matter: that man is shaped by his institutions.

In their view of 'human nature', the Machiavellians betray a lack of that historical sense which is the greatest contribution of Marxism to the modern consciousness. In their eyes the history of the past is a kind of morality-play which exposes, in endless repetitive scenes, the viciousness and gullibility of mankind. They are not interested in the differences between one period and another, and the reason for these differences, but rather in establishing, by myriad examples, that the same mental and moral qualities have produced and eternally will produce the same results. This view seems to me a regression to the pre-Hegelian historical tradition. A passage from Engels' *Anti-Duhring* is to the point:

'This newer German philosophy culminated in the Hegelian system, in which for the first time—and this is its great merit—the whole natural, historical and spiritual world was presented as a process, that is, as in constant motion, change, transformation and development; and the attempt was made to show the internal interconnections in this motion and development. From this standpoint, the history of mankind no longer appeared as a confused whirl of senseless deeds of violence, all equally condemnable before the judgment seat of the now matured philosophic reason, and best forgotten as quickly as possible, but as the process of the development of humanity itself.' (p. 30.)

For all their amassing of data, Mosca and Pareto never get beyond the descriptive level. They are unable to explain why social relations differed in the past and what differences may be expected in the future. In their terms, indeed, it is not possible to see why there should be *any* change at all, since, in Pareto's words, 'The centuries roll by; human nature remains the same.' Lacking any theory of historical development, they deal in 'eternal truths', relative to every time and place and hence relative to no time and place—in the style of the Enlightenment, though with a reverse content.

The Machiavellians, doubtless in reaction against the emphasis put on ultimate ends by the progressive ideologists, confuse

scientific objectivity with a disinterest in values. 'The law that it is an essential characteristic of all human aggregates to constitute cliques and sub-classes', writes Michels, 'is like every other sociological law, beyond good and evil.' (*Political Parties*, p. viii.) Pareto endlessly assures the reader that his 'logico-experimental' method is also beyond good and evil, dismissing 'Right Reason, Highest Good, Justice, Welfare, etc.' as 'all names that designate nothing more than indistinct and incoherent sentiment'. But, as a critic of Pareto well puts it: 'Ends and means profoundly affect one another, and it is impossible to deal logically with means without clarification of the nature of the ends. Reason, too, is concerned with the relation of various ends to each other, with the possibility of their mutual consistency, or harmony, and in cases of conflict with the grounds of preference.'¹ Even where ends are illusory, the scientist must account for men's choosing them and must explain their effect on reality. Yet although Pareto exposes in voluminous detail the rationalizations men have created to give an air of logic to their irrational actions, he never develops any theory to explain the *reasons* for this behaviour, since that would mean attempting to relate means and ends. Marx and Freud both evolved theories, but Pareto ignores their work in this field entirely—Freud's name fails to appear in the 100-page index to his four volumes—and contents himself with monotonous 'debunking', a procedure only one level higher than naïve faith.

The Machiavellians make a similar false disjunction between theory and action. 'Everybody can argue all night about how to save society', writes Burnham in *The Machiavellians*, 'but only a few have told us any truths about society.' They revise Marx's epigram: 'The democratic ideologists have only tried to change the world; the point, however, is to interpret it'.

But under the surface, they too have their values, just like Marx, the chief difference being they are less conscious of their bias and so less able to allow for it, which lands them in some very queer places. Their very lack of interest in values is itself a value, reflecting the hypertrophy of technique and organization and the atrophy of human consciousness that marks class society today, especially in the totalitarian countries. Pareto writes of 'the conflict between knowing and doing', and continues: 'For purposes of knowing, logico-experimental science is the only

¹ Morris Ginsberg in *The Sociological Review*, July 1936.

thing of any value; for purpose of doing, it is of much greater importance to follow the lead of sentiments'. The political result of this obscurantist dichotomy appears when he goes on to propose 'a community divided into two parts, the one in which knowledge prevails ruling and directing the other in which sentiments prevail, so that, in the end, action is vigorous and wisely directed'. (*The Mind and Society*, p. 1241.) From this to Mosca's accepting a Senatorship from Mussolini and Pareto's enshrinement as the ideological father of fascism is not a long step.¹

It is odd that Mosca and Pareto should have ended up in the fascist camp, for they were personally old-fashioned liberals, whose preferences lay along the line of Mosca's balance-of-power society, in which 'juridical defence'—i.e. civil liberties—would be insured by seeing that no one group or party grew strong enough to have things all its own way. The Church, the army, the business interests, the politicians, the peasants, even the trade unions were to keep enough autonomy to be able to check each other; political was to be separated from economic power; etc. This conservative programme was the result of their disillusionment with radical democracy. They came to feel that any attempt at revolutionary social change would result in a *worse* state of affairs. Napoleon expressed this attitude very well when he wrote in 1812:

'All the misfortunes that our beautiful France has been experiencing have to be ascribed to "ideology", to that cloudy metaphysics which goes ingeniously seeking first causes and would ground legislation upon them instead of adapting laws to what we know of the human heart and to the lessons of history. Such errors could only lead to a régime by men of blood . . .'

Pareto quotes this passage with approval. Yet he might have taken warning from the fact it was Napoleon, the dictator, who preferred tradition to 'ideology' (i.e. revolution). The Machiavellians were very sensitive to any threat against the balance of society from the revolutionary Left, but they seem unaware that capitalism in their day was already unbalanced by the rising power of Big Business, and that 'Juridical Defense' was threatened from the Right as well as from the Left. The cutting edge of their criticism was consistently directed against the progressive

¹ 'When, in an audience with Mussolini, I mentioned Pareto, he interrupted with emphasis, "He was my teacher. A great man—a very great man".' (A. G. Keller, in *The Yale Review*, June 1935).

ideologies, and when fascism materialized, they saw it as a bulwark of Liberalism against proletarian dictatorship. One hardly knows whether to laugh or cry when one reads that just before his death Pareto wrote an article solemnly warning the Fascist authorities not to make the 'mistake' of interfering with free speech and academic freedom, and insisting that the Italian universities should continue to teach Marxism.

The failure of the 1917 Revolution has caused a contemporary revival of the Machiavellian doctrine—attractive anyway to the American turn of mind because of its pragmatic disdain for values and general theory in favour of 'results', 'hard facts'. Two schools may be defined: the indigenous petty-bourgeois tradition (John Chamberlain, Charles A. Beard, *Common Sense* magazine), and the ex-Marxists (Max Eastman, James Burnham, Lewis Corey). The failure of 1917 has disillusioned the latter about Socialism and reinforced the former in their ancient hostility. There are big individual differences between the various Conservative Liberals, and some of them no doubt would repudiate the Machiavellians as their ideological godfathers. But the theory analysed above fits better than any other the actual tendency of their ideas. Eastman's ideas about the incompatibility of Socialism and human nature are straight out of Mosca and Pareto. Corey's proposal of a 'mixed economy'—or a 'mixed-up economy', as a friend calls it—and Chamberlain's earlier concept of a 'Permanent N.E.P.' are based on Mosca's 'juridical defense' formula. The psychological background of these beliefs is also similar to that of the Machiavellians: disappointment with the results of progressive movements. 'The Moscow Trials', Chamberlain writes, 'clinched the case for me against complete State ownership of the means and materials of production.' Just as the Machiavellians fashion an ideology simply by reversing the concepts of 1789, the Conservative Liberals, equally lacking in historical sense, simply reverse 1917—collectivism is the root of all evil, and the victory of any one class is to be avoided. Their formula for avoiding Thermidor is simple: don't make a revolution. If the Bolsheviks trusted too mechanically in collectivism and proletarian dictatorship, the Conservative Liberals have an equally mechanical faith that all good things will flow from the reverse of those propositions. Of the two errors—not that I think one must choose either—the Bolsheviks' is much the more forgivable.

The logic of events has put our Conservative Liberals into the same awkward positions as the Machiavellians found themselves. One might expect a 'juridical defensist' to favour the strengthening of labour unions in America today, for example, as a counterweight to the tremendous power of monopoly capitalism. Yet we find Chamberlain prosecuting, in the pages of *Fortune*, a spirited 'open shop' campaign. The ambivalent attitude of Mosca and Pareto towards fascism is repeated in their epigone, Burnham, who expounded the totalitarian elements in their philosophy in *The Managerial Revolution*, and now, in *The Machiavellians*, puts forward the liberal elements, without any apparent suspicion of the head-on collision between the two. And always, whatever their vagaries, the Conservative Liberals are led by their doctrine to line up with the top dog, the big battalions. Their superficial pragmatism and their overmastering fear of revolutionary change alike lead them to bow to the dominant forces of the moment. Their system is essentially no more than an apology for the *status quo*.

The Conservative Liberals, past and present, fail to see that in a society as dynamic and unstable as modern capitalism the effect of a 'debunking' of progressive ideology without putting anything positive in its place is not to bring society into balance, but simply to throw it still more in the totalitarian direction in which it is evolving of its own momentum. The Conservative Liberals' dream of a stable society run by an intelligently moderate élite proves inadequate either to control or explain the shattering forces working under the surface. History fills their ideas with an alien content, and their intelligent élite become the demagogues and adventurers of fascism.

VI

Finally, to sum up the line of my argument, and to apply it to the historical situation we are in:

1. *The development of the forces of production is pushing the world in a collectivist direction.* Hence the bourgeois-democratic *status quo* is dynamic, and cannot successfully be maintained either as a Maginot Line against fascism (Conventional Liberals) or a stable, balanced society (Conservative Liberals). The direction in which the bourgeois-democratic *status quo* is evolving is towards the 'bureaucratic collectivism' of Germany and Russia, because this

is more favourable to the present ruling class than would be the alternative of a working-class Socialist collectivism. To attempt to defend the *status quo* is to (1) weaken the progressive forces which might bring about the Socialist alternative, and (2) be one's self drawn along in the evolution towards the totalitarian alternative.

2. *The bureaucratic-collectivist movement of present-day society is destroying the basic progressive values.* These are my own values, and also, I imagine, the values of most of those who will read this. There is nothing eternal about them; they are historical phenomena and will disappear, are in fact disappearing, as capitalism develops into collectivism without social revolution. Marxian Socialism offers the best chance of reconciling collectivism with progressive values.

3. *Bureaucratic collectivism may or may not develop into a new form of class rule as permanent as was that of the bourgeoisie.* It is too early to tell, and the alternative Socialist evolution is still possible. Up to now it has been no more than a series of *ad hoc* solutions to various crises: the 1929 depression in capitalist nations, the isolation of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, preparation for war in all cases. It is still opportunistic, 'unconscious' in an historical sense. Not until the present phase of armed struggle for the redivision of the globe has resulted in the assured dominance of one or more Powers, and has been followed by the successful readaptation of bureaucratic collectivism to peacetime conditions—not till then can we see it as the next great historical epoch. During the war period, which will probably extend long beyond the defeat of the Axis powers, there will be unexpected overturns, sharp breaks in ruling-class control; and the transition to peace may be expected also to have its deep economic and social crises.

4. *There will, therefore, be revolutionary opportunities for a long time.* They may or may not be successfully exploited. The organized working-class movement is today extremely weak. And anyone who has taken active part in the Trotskyist movement, as I have, knows how fossilized as to theory, sectarian as to action, and undemocratic as to organization the present Marxist revolutionary groups have become. We need new working-class organizations, new radical parties, a reshaping of Marxian doctrine—all three on a less exclusively working-class basis, with a broader sense of human fraternity and democratic rights. But the road ahead lies that way, not in a retreat to pre-Marxist

concepts and an attempt to compromise with a deteriorating *status quo*. Furthermore, those who insist on the hopelessness of the socialist cause must either show that some other class and programme is more likely to realize progressive values, or else abandon those values. My objection to the various Liberal positions is that they do neither.

5. *The issues go much deeper than the political level.* The whole culture-pattern of American society, for example, has been formed by the present ruling class, through its control of the press, the radio, the schools, the movies, the churches and other instruments of expression. This is why, although the ideological requirements of a war against Hitler call for humane and democratic values, our war leaders have done nothing to re-educate people along those lines. The increase of race prejudice during the very war allegedly against Nazi racialism is one indication of how deeply American society has been impregnated with reactionary prejudices, and the ominous direction these prejudices will take in any crisis situation *so long as no positive counterforce is exerted*. Only a philosophy of the underdog, the common man, that is willing to carry its logic to revolutionary extremes can shatter the monopoly of culture in the hands of the upper classes.

6. *The process of revolutionary struggle itself has a profound effect on 'human nature'.* It brings out virtues and intelligences in the masses which have been systematically repressed by respectable society. Who has not been impressed, and even amazed, at the heroism, the capacity for sacrifice, the energy and resourcefulness, the fraternity, the spontaneous co-operation manifested by the Russian masses in the early revolutionary years, the French workers in the great strikes of 1936, the Spanish people in the first two years of the Civil War, and our own rubber and automobile workers during the 1937 sit-down strikes?

There is a fine passage in *The German Ideology*: 'Both for the production on a mass scale of this Communist consciousness and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*. This revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.'

J. KESSEL

PHILIPPE GERBIER'S NOTEBOOK¹—II

AN ADVENTURE OF JEAN FRANÇOIS

THE part of the maquis where Jean François is working is quite close to a fairly large town, where he often goes for provisions communications and false papers. Too often, in my opinion, because he was arrested there by the French police as he got off the train.

Jean François has acquired a taste for hand-grenades from his war experience in 'Reconnaissance' and had three in his suitcase. As he and his two captors were making their way with the crowd of travellers through the station exit, Jean was able to get his suitcase open and dump the contents on the ground. In picking them up he managed to slip the grenades into his pockets. While he was being taken to the Commissariat he twice stooped down to do up his shoe-laces, and the grenades were left in the gutter. The police then became suspicious of his movements and hand-cuffed him.

'Take them off a moment and let him sign his deposition' said the Commissioner when Jean François was brought up to him. Hardly were the handcuffs off than the two arms of Jean François shot out and struck the officers on each side, who both fell inwards across him. He shook them off, pushed the Commissioner away and made for the door of the police station. A priest entered at this moment. 'Stop thief' yelled the two policemen who had taken up the pursuit again. The priest blocked the door. 'Gaullist, Gaullist', cried Jean François. The priest let him by and immediately barred the way for the two officers. They all rolled over on the doorstep, and while the policemen were extricating themselves from the priest's cassock, Jean François ran down one street, then another, then another, and found his way to liberty.

But for how long?

His jacket had been torn in the struggle. If he went to the home

¹The characters and details of the incidents described in this article are fictitious.

of anybody he knew he risked putting the police on the track of the whole local organization. He would have to leave the town as quickly as possible, but the station was more closely watched than anywhere else. Jean François decided to leave on foot, but first of all he had to change his appearance. He went into an empty barber's shop and called for the owner, who came shuffling out of the back room in bedroom slippers. His appearance was unattractive—weasel-faced with cautious little eyes hidden by flabby eyelids. A real informer's head—but Jean François had neither time nor choice. He explained that he wanted to have his moustache shaved off and his hair, which was naturally ash-blonde, dyed black. 'A practical joke I am preparing—a bet with my girl-friend,' he said. The barber made no reply and started work in silence. From time to time Jean François tried to catch the barber's eye in the looking-glass, but never would he meet it and he did not speak a word for an hour. 'I'm sold out,' thought Jean François. 'How is that,' asked the barber at length. 'Very good', thought Jean François. He was in fact quite unrecognizable and his hard dark face was now painful for him to contemplate. He gave 20 francs to the barber. 'I will bring you back your change', was the reply. 'It is not worth your trouble,' said Jean François. 'I will bring you back the change', repeated the barber. He disappeared behind the dirty curtain. At this moment Jean François was so certain he was being denounced that he hesitated between two alternatives—whether simply to escape or to do his man in before he fled. He had no time to decide, for the barber came back almost at once with an old mackintosh over his arm. 'Put this on quickly,' he said in a low voice, still without looking at Jean François. 'It is not a good overcoat, but it's all I've got. You would soon be noticed in those torn clothes.'



Jean François told me this story as gaily as ever, but his gaiety did not seem to me to have its usual freshness. His laugh seemed a little too hard. Perhaps it is the colour of his hair which is now as black as ink, which alters his whole expression, or perhaps he too is beginning to bear the stamp of the man in constant danger and to feel the invisible presence always on the look-out behind his shoulders. In any case he must do no more liaison work with the patron. I don't want the least thread to lead the police towards

St. Luc. I said this to Jean François who accepted it without replying. He very rarely speaks of his brother and when he does it is briefly. The fact that his brother and the patron are the same person seems to embarrass him. I regret this reserve of Jean François, for I like hearing him say 'St. Luc.'

The three comrades with whose escape Louis H. has entrusted us took the train yesterday at 7.45. They were in a third-class carriage with handcuffs on their hands and guarded by five gendarmes. Mathilde got on the train at the same time wearing a black coat and a scarf of the same colour on her head. She found herself in the same coach as the prisoners. The train went through several stations and then continued across the lonely countryside. At 11.10 Mathilde pulled the communication cord, then she slipped into the next carriage to the one where the prisoners were, got to the window and unfastened her black scarf. A few moments after the train came to a stop the Bison and two of our men rushed over the railway embankment and got in from the outside of the compartment where the gendarmes and the comrades of Louis H. were. Our men had sub-machine guns. The gendarmes took off the prisoners' handcuffs and then we made them take off their own clothes, which they did not seem to mind too much. The comrades of Louis H. and our men took the gendarmes uniforms and their carbines and jumped out on the line. The guard of the train arrived at this moment. 'You can start now', cried the Bison to him and the train continued its journey. Mathilde did not even get out. The place we chose for the rescue was about twelve kilometres from a fairly large estate. It was the estate belonging to the big wine-grower who had offered me a tank. He had been hiding on the other side of the embankment with a cart and two horses. In the cart there were some big empty wine barrels. Louis H.'s men and our two hid in the bottom of the barrels. The wine-grower took them home to his stillroom. The Bison and his two comrades went away at nightfall and the escaped prisoners are going to have a week of forgetfulness at the wine-grower's and get fat again. During a trip down their way I spent an evening with them. The three men had no flesh left on their bones, for the discipline at their concentration camp was much more severe than the one where I knew Legrain. No parcels allowed, a great deal of useless hard labour, a constant watch all the time, sentries at night in each hut and the

high-tension current in the barbed wire. The prisoners were so hungry that they ate the grass which grew in the camp and the Commander made his inspection every day with a horsewhip under his arm. That set the tone for the warders. However, the brutalities had ceased quite suddenly owing to the intervention—so one of the escaped men told me—of the most ridiculous of our comrades. This little provincial squire spent his life in normal times writing adventure stories which were published in the local papers. He carried on his resistance in the style of his novels. It was a wonder that he had not been shot. We had never seen a man more impulsive, more boastful, more fantastical, but one day he told the Commander that he had a portable wireless hidden in the camp itself, that he was in communication with London and that he would have the Commander executed if a single stroke was given once to a single person. The old brute was frightened.

There was in the same camp a section for Communists who were, as always, treated in a particularly appalling way. Somehow a few of them managed to escape but three days later they came back to give themselves up again, for they had escaped 'without Party authorization' and the Party sent them back to the camp. This fact reminded me of a conversation that I had had with a Communist Deputy who had escaped from a camp at Chateaubriand. He was easily able to escape but he had not done so until the Party had told him. Only three of his comrades were told off for this escape. The others had remained there and had been included afterwards in the first official massacre of hostages. In prison and in the concentration camp the worst torture of this Deputy was to think that he had been taken prisoner in his home, for the Communist Party had forbidden all its important militants ever to go back to their houses. 'You understand', said this man who had given to the Party twenty-five years of his life, 'you understand' I might have been expelled and I would have deserved it. Luckily, they were kind at Party headquarters, they simply ticked me off and gave me some work to do.' This work consisted in secretly editing *Humanité*. At that time four of its chief editors had already been shot.

I do not know a man in the Resistance who does not speak of the Communists with a special quality in his voice and expression, a deeper gravity.

An officer from the French headquarters had just come to

spend a few weeks in Paris on an important mission. The day after the bombing of the Renault factories by the Americans we heard a workman from the same factory in the Metro whose arm was in a sling openly rejoicing at the results of the raid. My companion slipped something into the uninjured hand of the workman. It was the Cross of Lorraine. 'I know it's a ridiculous gesture,' he said to me afterwards, 'but I have not been in Paris for three years and the discovery of this new nation has turned my head a little.'

A fairly long journey in the company of Major the Marquis de B. who was condemned to hard labour for life for his patriotism and who has escaped after thirty months of horrible imprisonment; he is a man with an exceptional temperament, very brave and very level-headed. Still waiting for us to find a passage to England for him, he travels up and down the country to get information as if he had a regular job, and as if all the police of France were not looking for him. 'I feel I have been living like a blind man,' he told me. 'In my circles we had neither the opportunity nor the time, nor the wish, I must tell you, to come close and get to know the working classes. Since my escape I see nobody but them and I shan't forget my lesson.' When changing trains we found ourselves seats in a carriage where there was a drunken German soldier. Soon he started being sick over our feet. Major de B.'s face became very pale and he muttered '*Heraus Schwein!*' Did the soldier think he was in the presence of a German officer in mufti or an agent of the Gestapo, or did he simply obey automatically the voice of a superior? I don't know, but he left the carriage. Many people of the Resistance spend most of their time in the train. Nothing can be trusted to the telephone, to the telegraph or to the post. Every mail must be carried. Every contact, every confidence requires a journey, and besides there are the distribution of arms, of papers, of radios and of equipment for sabotage, which explains the necessity for an army of liaison officers who go up and down France like horses on a merry-go-round. This explains some of the terrible blows which befall them, for the enemy knows as well as we do how we are obliged to travel without stopping. I have never taken a trip of any length without coming across two, three or four comrades of one organization or another and I have guessed who they were even without knowing them. For being a conspirator one develops an

almost infallible instinct in this respect. I wonder if this instinct is as strong with the police.

I think I am being followed by an old boy with a trimmed beard and the Legion of Honour. Is it a manoeuvre of the Gestapo? I will put one of our people to follow the old gentleman.

★ ★ ★

The Bison has had a stupid accident. He was going along very fast on a motor bicycle stolen from the Germans and had a crash. Coma. Hospital. He had on him two revolvers and his big clasp knife. His arms were deposited at the Record Office and the French and German police were warned. They carried the almost unconscious Bison to an operating table. A cracked skull and broken jaw. The police arrived and seeing him still unconscious put off the questioning until the next day. The Bison came round about dawn, his head completely wrapped up in bandages. He was suffering terribly but there were no warders so he got up and left the hospital by a window. He went stumbling through the town and came to a tram which was on its way to a suburb where he has friends. The Bison climbed into the tram. 'I saw four doors,' he said, 'luckily I found the right one.'

There are now two people following me: the old boy with the Legion of Honour and another who pretends to be selling lottery tickets. It is time to disappear. Evidently I have been travelling too much.

★ ★ ★

It is very disagreeable, for the woman with whom I am staying is afraid. A priest who is on our side asked her to shelter me and she did it from a sense of duty and because the priest has instructed her for years, but she is in a constant state of anguish. If the bell rings or there is a knock at the door her breathing stops, and yet it is impossible for me to stay without liaisons. I contemplate disguises but my eyes are too close together and my nose is too typical. A beard on my face is unnatural and besides the police are suspicious of all beards nowadays. I am badly made for playing in comedy. We had a comrade who easily became hunch-backed and whose appearance was so pathetic that the Germans often gave their place up to him in the Metro. He would sit down with great precaution for he carried a great many things

in his hump. An urgent mission obliges me to go on a voyage. What a relief in the eyes of the woman who has been putting me up!

* * *

The very day that I left the flat of Madame S. the police came there. The search came to nothing, but all the same they took Madame S. away.

* * *

I went away to complete a series of plans which I have been preparing for a long time and which London is interested in. In the ordinary way I go to a farmer who lives near my objective and who gives me all the information. So that I shall not be noticed in this very closely watched neighbourhood the Doctor from the nearest town takes me in his car to a clearing, whence I reach the farm under the cover of the bushes. This time the Doctor was short of petrol and could only bring me to a lane and then had to leave at once. At the entry to the lane—it was a beautiful evening—a German soldier was strolling. He did not see me get out but he saw the car come and go away again. I had dinner with the farmer and showed him my plans which I had just slipped back into my pocket, when the soldier of the lane came in and made a sign for me to follow him. The road was deserted and I had the idea for the moment of jumping on his back, gouging his eyes out and killing him, but I was afraid of getting the farmer shot. That was also the reason why I did not dare get rid of my plans. We arrived at a military post where the soldier took me up before the officer in command and explained my case. This officer was dark and I remember very well that this fact gave me hope. I prefer dark Germans to fair ones. ‘What were you doing at the farm?’ the officer asked me. I had had time to get my answer ready. I said that I was an agent for an agricultural insurance company. ‘What insurance company?’ ‘The Zurich,’ I said. I didn’t say it by chance. I don’t know what interior flash had warned me that if a name of an insurance company was capable of interesting this officer and thereby removing his suspicion it was exactly that one, and as it turned out he knew the town of Zurich and so did I. We spoke of its gardens, its theatres and museums and of Switzerland, and he let me go without searching me.

The plans which I had taken had to be handed over by me to a big business office in Paris: Avenue de l'Opéra. Two days later, having travelled only by little local lines, I presented myself there. Just as I was about to ring the bell the door opened of its own accord. A hand fell quietly on my wrist and drew me inside. I found myself in the presence of German police officers. Since the morning the office had become a booby trap. 'Who are you and what have you come to do?' I immediately invented a reason which was according to the usual operations of the business. 'Papers?' I showed my latest which had been made out for me after my being shadowed by the two old men. One of the policemen went to the telephone and spoke with the headquarters of the Gestapo. I understand German and I followed the conversation. On the other end of the line they asked the policeman to read a list of names. I heard the one which I went under only ten days ago. The policeman came back to me, gave me back my papers and showed me the door. I tried to go down as slowly as I could. In the concierge's lodge I thought I saw a man with spectacles. I went out, started walking and stopped in front of a shop window. A few paces away from me was a man with glasses. Then I went to a baker's that I know which has a double exit. In this way I gained a few minutes. I saw a fire station where I found some well-disposed people. They hid me in a fire wagon and took me in their car to a second-hand furniture dealer on the left bank, one of our best agents. I gave him the plans and the next day I left Paris pushing a hand-cart full of old chairs. Three times, one after the other, I have escaped the worst. What an extraordinary combination of probabilities! A believer would have called this series a row of miracles. A baccarat player would have said it was a good hand.

★ ★ ★

I have gone to earth in a tiny village at the house of a blackmarket slaughterer. Every day he is brought a pig or calf or ox which he bleeds, kills and cuts up. He is protected by the whole population whom he feeds on cheap meat. This man is a saint of the black market. His wish is just to earn his living and his pleasure is to trick the Germans and Vichy. He feeds and shelters me for an absurd sum and gives me the best tit-bits. For once, for a wonder, I am saturated with meat. The clandestine slaughterer

is also hiding an ex-minister who is soon to leave for London. We play bowls together. The weather is lovely, the mountain air is keen and time passes quickly. When one goes, as we do, from one precarious hiding place to another, at the mercy of accomplices, of good will or of pursuit, one is bound to visit some extraordinary places, and the faculty of being surprised at anything diminishes. But this time mine is woken up again by my new hide-out. It is a little eighteenth-century manor-house with the panelling, tapestry, paintings and furniture of the period. All round it are silent plantations and in front of the façade a pond where waterlilies are in flower. The avenues are covered with moss. Everything seems asleep within the walls which are falling to pieces round the park. The manor belongs to two old ladies, two sisters who never married and who have lived there for three-quarters of a century. They had a brother whom they adored who was killed in 1914. Little by little their friends have died off and now they know nobody. The estate lies far from the roads and they have never seen a German. Their food, which consists of cheese and vegetables, is seen to by an old farmer and stays just the same. Life and the world have forgotten these ladies. My blackmarket slaughterer sees the farmer occasionally and spoke to him about me, the farmer spoke of me to his mistresses, and so here I am. In the day-time I go for walks through the enchanted trees where the animals have no fear of man. In the evening I listen to the song of the frogs and later to the cry of the horned owls. At mealtimes the old ladies in exquisite French ask me questions about the war. But they cannot follow my answers for they do not know what is an aeroplane, a tank, a radio, or even the telephone. They were already sunk in a kind of lethargy when the other war began, and the death of their brother definitely stopped for them the movement of the universe.

The only war which is really living for them is that of 1870. Their father, their uncles and their old cousins took part in it. The stories which they brought back moved the youth of these two ladies, whose hatred of the Prussians dates from a time when I was not born and yet I profit from it. One day I tried to paint for these old ladies a great picture of the Resistance. They nodded their thin, wrinkled faces. 'I understand, my sister, I understand', said one to the other. 'They are like the franc-tireurs.' 'But honest and well brought up, my sister', cried the other.

Time passes and time weighs heavy. I think a lot about the patron. He could live for ever in a place like this and I wish I had his book by me, the only one which he wrote. Few people know it, but there are a few wise men throughout the world who hold J. for their equal on account of this book. It is because of this book that I wanted to get to know him. For a long time he was my intellectual father, too.

★ ★ ★

I have a new name and once more I have shaved off my moustache. My hair is very long and I wear an old cape. I am book-keeper with an industrialist who employs about a hundred workers. I sleep at the factory. The most regular identity card is not good enough any more for the police. During my retreat, the control machine, the machine to choke us, has been terribly tightened up. On account of the deportations and the deserters they demand a worker's card, a censor's certificate and a certificate of domicile. The roundups and the dragnets go on without stopping. Trams and restaurants, cafés and cinemas, are all searched. Apartment by apartment, whole quarters are purged. It is impossible to travel a hundred kilometres in a train without being questioned by policemen. The whole business becomes impossibly difficult and the women are going to have more and more work to do.

★ ★ ★

Took a studio for our contacts. In this house I pass for a painter who likes to paint when he chooses and to entertain his friends. This morning I had a rendezvous at the studio with Jean François, Lemasque and Felix. It was months since I had seen them and we had a lot of things to arrange for their maquis. When I came up to the house the concierge was on the door-step gently beating an old carpet. Seeing me across the street she suddenly began to beat it with a kind of frenzy. This concierge has never been one of us and knows nothing of my activities. All the same, I did not go in.

★ ★ ★

This woman has deliberately saved my life. An extremely simple chain of circumstances has led to a catastrophe. In leaving his region Jean François delegated his command to an ex-officer who has plenty of authority but too much optimism and no sense

of conspiracy. It was necessary for him to send a message to Jean François and to provide a liaison agent. He chose a young boy without any experience and, instead of sending him to a relay, he gave him the street address and the number of the studio. The lad, while waiting between changing trains, went to sleep. He was woken up by a comb-out. They found my address on him and he was not able to invent a plausible explanation. A trap was laid and Lemasque, Felix and Jean François were caught. It was then that the concierge thought of her alarm signal.

★ ★ ★

News of Jean François. The police questioned him in the studio, having before him all the papers found on Jean François, Lemasque and Felix. Jean François answered somehow or other. Suddenly he bit the commissioner in the hand and so violently that he took a piece of his palm off. He took up the papers, piled the two inspectors on top of each other and went down the staircase like a hurricane. He got the reports safely to me and has gone back to the maquis with my instructions.

★ ★ ★

News of Felix. On a scrap of India paper Felix had the address of a safety apartment taken in the name of a young girl and where I went from time to time in the guise of her protector. This address Felix had re-written according to a code of his. When questioned, he managed to interpret the signs as a rendezvous taken on a certain day and a certain hour in a public square with an important leader of the Resistance. He confessed this with the hesitations, the reticencies and the evasions which were necessary for him to be believed, and in the same way he agreed to lead two policemen to this false rendezvous. He arrived in the middle of the square, going a few steps in front of the policemen. A tram passed. Felix jumped in, ran across and out the other side and disappeared among the passers-by. Then he wished to warn me and came back to the safety address. But in the meantime the young girl who had rented it had come to my studio, where the police had made her talk. Felix was recaptured. He was imprisoned like Lemasque at Vichy in the cellars of the Hotel Bellevue, which had been requisitioned by the Gestapo.

I saw in the factory a little workman who had passed eight months without any cause in the German quarter of the prison of Fresne. He has two ribs broken and he limps for life. What is most insupportable according to him is the heavy smell of pus which has spurted out over the walls of the cells. 'The smell of my mates who have been tortured', he said. I think of Lemasque. I think of my old friend Felix.

★ ★ ★

News of Lemasque. He was shut up in the same cellar as Felix with handcuffs and irons on his feet. Felix was considered the most dangerous, they had it in for him for having fooled the Gestapo. They questioned him on the first day. He never came back from his interrogation, but that night, by the light of the bulbs in the ceiling, Lemasque saw the corpse of Felix being dragged down the corridor by a rope tied round the neck. Felix's body had no eyes left and no lower jaw. Lemasque felt so much fear at undergoing the same torture that quite suddenly he *knew* that he would escape. He succeeded (he will never be able to say how) in undoing the padlock which fastened the irons to his ankles. With his handcuffed arms he loosened the badly-fixed bars of the air-shaft of the cellar and, feet first, he wriggled out. There he was in the streets of Vichy with handcuffs still on his hands. The only person he knew in Vichy was an employee of the Ministry who lived in a commandeered hotel. Lemasque went to see him once to obtain a false safe-conduct. In the streets, overrun by patrols of gardes mobiles and the Gestapo on their beat, Lemasque, in his handcuffs, started off to look for the hotel. It was necessary that he should find it before the dawn or he would be lost. The hours go by. Lemasque wanders round Vichy. At last he thinks he has found the place. He gets into the sleeping hotel. One last effort, a desperate effort of memory, to recall the floor and the exact position of the room. At last Lemasque thinks he has remembered it. He knocks at the door, which is opened. It is indeed the comrade who is on our side. That evening a friendly workman came with a saw for metals and freed Lemasque from his handcuffs. I have had the story confirmed by the employee at the Ministry and by the workman. Without that I would always have wondered if Lemasque had not weakened and that his escape had been made easy by the Gestapo.

D

The Resistance movement commits sabotage, it attacks and kills with abundance and with obstinacy and now with spontaneity. All the organizations have their combat groups. The franc-tireurs (mostly communists) make up quite an army. The density of German corpses has become such that the enemy has had to give up the hostage system. They cannot any longer line up 100 dead Frenchmen for one dead German, unless they were prepared to assassinate the whole of France. The enemy has thus almost publicly recognized that the country is above torture. But the Gestapo goes on with its terrible work. It aims at replacing all the hostages by better chosen suspects.

[Translated by C. C.]

TO BE CONCLUDED

HONOR TRACY

THE PLEASURES OF TREASON

THE name of a traitor is not given to Henry de Montherlant because he has chosen to throw in his lot with the enemy. As a nation, we love to cry 'treason!' whenever some foreign country or individual refuses to devote it or himself to H.M. material interests. In a conflict like the present, involving the fundamental issues of human life, religion, morality and the social order, everyone should choose his camp. We raised no objection when the intelligence and the wisdom of a Thomas Mann brought him to our side; we ought to have raised none when that of a P. G. Wodehouse took him to the other.

Some French authors are collaborating with real conviction, some do it for money and some because they lack political sense. Only Montherlant, revealing himself as a sinister portent for our time, collaborates for the fun of it. He is the twentieth-century man whose mind is an obscene tangle of the accumulated creeds, the man who, unlike Mlle. Dandillot, is intelligent enough to hold all the political faiths at once. He dwells on the 'plaisir de trahir' in one book with voluptuous enjoyment; it is a pleasure, he tells us, that is not acquired but innate. His noble ancestors of the Midi

had it, and betrayed their friends, their enemies, their lovers, those who opposed them and those who depended on them without distinction.

During the years before the war it was impossible to mention his name in Paris without provoking violent reactions. The most charitable of Catholics found it hard to forgive the blasphemies with which his books were crammed. He enraged the feminists by four volumes of witty invective against women, so that they went so far as to rejoice publicly when he was gored by a bull in the arena. Jews saw the old enemy, whose face in other countries wore a look of impenetrable stupidity, advancing under the banners of genius. But in spite of these and other groups he had a great following. Studies and analyses of the man and his work poured out one after the other. A certain Schoenemark, to gain the doctorate of Philosophy at Greifswald University, offered a thesis entitled: *Henry de Montherlant als Vertreter der französischen Nachkriegs generation*; recognition could hardly go further.

The saying that the style is the man was never falser than here. Montherlant is incomparable as an artist in words, as a creator of lyrical beauty, as an impressionist above all, and, when he wanders into the field of religion and politics, he writes his depraved nonsense so freshly and forcibly that it streams into the mind like a salt breeze. Hence he has been called a great moralist and, to be sure, there are signs that he regards himself as a new Savonarola; but if we separate the content of his moralizing from the brilliance of its form, it must be said it is suggestive less of the fiery monk than of the old family governess.

Mademoiselle when first she came to us was cheerful, fond of games and an excellent disciplinarian, but the years of frustration and the obstinate refusal of her little charges to believe her megalomaniac legends, have left her capricious and a trifle absurd. Mademoiselle says we must all learn to use a machine-gun and keep it by us. It fidgets her when matches don't strike or doors won't shut or when other people talk too much. Films drive her nearly mad, although she frequently visits them. On the other hand, we may eat as much cake as we like, because Mademoiselle is fond of cake herself, and she sees no harm in tearing the wings off little birds.

Montherlant, to do him justice, has stumbled on some truth in all his moralizing. For instance, he has some good things to say

about *L'hamour*, which may be translated as 'lurv' and defined as the sexual relationship stripped of everything which gives it dignity: it has no passion, no grace, either Christian or pagan; it lacks even the simplicity of the animal: its aim is not to create life but to kill time. Having perceived all this, however, Montherlant proceeds by the light of his unreason to a diagnosis and then to a prescription which are nothing short of lunatic. Confusing 'lurv' with charity, he puts it down to the teaching of a person whom he describes as the Celebrated Jew. Throughout the centuries, Christianity has sown the germs of decay among the healthy warring nations and now at last is leading many of them to destruction. It has preferred weakness to strength, disease to health, peace to war: it has allowed woman 'to think she is someone'. In the Christian West, which is dominated by women, there is a cult of pain and suffering: in the heathen East, where the man is master, there is the cult of wisdom. The art and science and inventive genius of Europe are brushed aside, and it is interesting to note that the two Eastern peoples which epitomize the male intellect triumphant are the Bedouins and the Japanese.

The cure for this anæmia, as indeed for all our spiritual confusion and despair, is war. Shortly after the fall of France, Montherlant went to a cinema which showed first a negro cabaret in New York and then a Parisian comedy, with its inevitable cuckolded bourgeois. Before these abject spectacles, 'je me dis, posément, mais avec quelque chose de cette certitude illuminée que doivent avoir les mystiques quand ils disent: "il n'y a que Dieu"', je me dis: "il n'y a que la guerre. La guerre est la seule réalité".¹ To bolster this up—for our iconoclast does not despise a little moral support now and then, and his misapprehensions and misquotations provide an abundance of entertaining footnotes—he tears from its context in *The Crown of Wild Olive* a passage in which Ruskin says that only war can inspire the great virtues and the noble arts. It is clear that, in fact, Ruskin intended these words as a sop to the young cadets he was addressing, a little sugar to sweeten the truths which were to follow; yet if he had really meant that nothing short of the fear of violent and immediate death could induce the average man to behave or exert himself, this would still not be enough for Montherlant.

¹ *Le Solstice de juin* 1941.

‘Que voulons-nous, en fin de compte? Un intelligent, et qui ait du sang. Son sang le pousse au combat: son intelligence postule l’incroyance. Le combat sans la foi, c’est la formule à laquelle nous aboutissons forcément, si nous voulons maintenir la seule idée de l’homme qui soit acceptable.’¹

The concept of war without faith, total, perpetual and meaningless war, at first seems so fatuous, so irresponsible as to be no more than what Montherlant, that prince of literary men, contemptuously calls ‘literature’: a kind of freakish ‘acte gratuite’ like the murder of an unknown man, for no reason; but it cannot be dismissed with a shrug, for today it finds an echo in the perverted millions.

That scepticism which Montherlant attributes to intelligence derives, in fact, from his having discarded all the faiths and taken up all the attitudes in turn. We know the type of eminent actor who loves to play the great men of history one by one and who, the more fanciful his costume and the more exaggerated his make-up, remains the more inescapably himself. Likewise we have seen in glorious technicolour Montherlant the pagan, the soldier-monk, the man of the Renaissance, the Puritan, and now, forsooth, the Samourai and the Prussian: but he never penetrated the heart of any one of them: he wore them as masks, now hideous, now grotesque, now sham-heroic, twisted by the deforming violence of his imagination: and through their eye-holes he looked, and by their lips he voiced his implacable hatred towards everything which is not himself.

That hatred is the key to everything. He hates women simply because they are different from him. One of his heroes, it does not matter which, for they are all the author himself, remarks that he has more in common with the grossest and stupidest man than with any woman of no matter what talent and distinction, and this is uttered in all seriousness as a reproach to the sex. He hates Christians because they oppose their way of charity to his way of bloodshed, their respect for mankind to his contempt. He denies them any virtue at all because their virtue is not his, and remarks that the Roman Emperors would have had no trouble in stamping Christianity out if only they had carried their persecutions out in a resolute way. Passing a small religious gathering at a street-corner in Paris, he wishes he could throw petrol over the

¹ *Ibid.*

participants and then set fire to them. Most of all, perhaps, he hates the ordinary bourgeois, the much-derided, the slapped in front and kicked behind, with his morning train, his loads of family care and his small Sunday pleasures: because in his dull way he has taken hold of life and got the better of it, while the brilliant Montherlant can only sit and rattle his bones.

He writes with a maudlin tenderness of the boys moving up to the great battle on the front, and the dying German soldier in *Le Songe*: he describes with relish an act of atrocious cruelty to Andrée Hacquebaut in *Le Démon du Bien*: because his own flesh might have been torn by shrapnel at the front, or he might have lain dying with enemy soldiers standing round him, but he could never have known the misery of a woman, no longer young, poor and obscure, whose love is not simply refused but savagely trampled underfoot. And, of his own kind, all that might conceivably surpass or overshadow him, must be obliterated. Alban-Montherlant holds his college magazine idly in the hand and sees that 'durant sa pensée, distraitement, il avait tracé un signe en face du nom de ce camarade, puis de cet autre, puis de cet autre. Soudain il le reconnaît, c'est un deleatur d'imprimerie. "Qu'il soit détruit. Qu'il soit détruit. Qu'il soit détruit".'¹ Yet he is not content with their death. 'Je suis affreusement jaloux de ce mort-là,' Alban says of a promising young friend who had been killed in action, for the boy no longer has to prove himself, he need not now be humiliated by Alban's superiority, he lies in the grave, victorious and aloof.

But the years pass, the turbulence of youth dies down, the tigerish smile becomes a grimace and the bugle-call is followed by the scratch of the gramophone needle. *Le Solstice de Juin*, which was the first of his works under the German occupation, adheres to formula. There is a long account of *L'Ordre*, a kind of secret society which he and a few other young men formed after the Great War, and of which the puerile activities fill him with nostalgia. The pages devoted to Bushido and the Samourai are nothing but *Japonerie* worse than was ever produced by Pierre Loti. These heroes with the passion for knowledge, these artist-warriors, who go into battle with a fan in one hand and a sword in the other, are creatures of his own fantasy conceived 'in the style of life that is hard and tender, the style which pleases me':

¹ *Le Songe*.

and well it may, for the fan is always for yourself and the sword for someone else. There is nauseating adulation of Hitler and the Nazis: the swastika, that symbol of intrigue and revenge, is hailed as the banner of the sun, the glorious pagan sun which is to sweep away the shadows of the Cross. The old ideas are there, worming about each other, but the magnificence of the style has vanished. Henry de Montherlant is learning that to write in praise of slavery an artist has to be free, and that he cannot compose an ode to brutality with a storm trooper at his elbow.

The war without faith comes from hatred and contempt of the fellow man and the pleasures of treason come from the same. When the crowd is in despair, they turn towards one who has dazzled them for so long and who made so free with the words, *homme, guerrier, honneur and mâle vertu*, for they are curious to know what all that virility adds up to and they expect some kind of gesture. The Happy Warrior has never done much but come home with his head tied up and demand pity for his wounds and admiration for the wounds he gave to others, but this one forsakes them altogether for daring to suppose, in their littleness, that they have a claim upon him. He shows himself in the streets and the cafés with their conqueror, like the last of public women. Whether, in the new days to come, he carries out a *volte face* more agile than any yet, or puts on a suicide, or comes quietly to live in Tunbridge Wells as a refugee from liberty, equality and fraternity, this Neanderthaler of genius, this gorilla who likes to pick flowers, will be remembered in France as the man who betrayed her because it gave him pleasure.

PETER QUENNELL

LAURENCE STERNE

I

In January 1763, Boswell had yet to complete his twenty-third, Gibbon his twenty-sixth year. Laurence Sterne, however, by this time had travelled almost half a century; and, unlike theirs, his beginnings had not been favourable. Poverty in its gloomiest form had attended his early progress. Behind him stood no

Buriton, no Auchinleck, but the succession of barrack-rooms and cheap lodgings through which Ensign Sterne was followed by his wife and family. Now and then they were quartered on a more prosperous relative; for, though Roger Sterne was a poor and improvident soldier, he came of a hard-headed and successful line, being the grandson of a seventeenth-century prelate, Bishop of Carlisle and afterwards Archbishop of York, whose descendants had married wisely and enriched themselves considerably. But Roger, as a younger son, had his way to make in the world. At the age of sixteen, in 1708, he decided for a military life, joined the Thirty-fourth Regiment of Foot and was presently shipped to the Netherlands, where the regiment fought under Marlborough's command till the Peace of Utrecht.

Meanwhile, he had contracted an unusually foolish marriage. Among other hangers-on who followed the Allied armies was a 'noted Sutler', named Nuttle, encumbered with a step-daughter by the name of Agnes Hebert, 'widow of a captain of good family', whom he was anxious to dispose of. Since the Ensign was in debt to the Sutler, he would appear to have put forward the impulsive suggestion that he should settle his account by wedding Agnes; and the agreement was duly ratified on 11 September 1711. Such at least was the story told by their elder son, who did not love his mother but preserved all his life a sort of romantic veneration for his father's oddities. Laurence Sterne was born at Clonmel (where his mother had connections) on 24 November 1713, a few days after Mrs. Sterne reached London from Dunkirk. He was the second child; for he had been preceded by a sister in 1712, who grew up to be a beauty and died of a broken heart consequent on the merciless ill-treatment of her husband, a Mr. Weemans of Dublin, and was followed by 'Joram—a pretty boy', carried away by the small-pox when he was four years old, Anne, Devijeher and Susan, who also dropped off early, as well as Catherine, who survived to shame and annoy her brother. Laurence himself had been born in an exceedingly unlucky year. Peace entailed the disbandment of his father's regiment; Ensign Sterne 'with many other brave officers', was cast 'adrift into the wide world', and, as soon as Laurence could be moved, the Sternes took refuge at his grandmother's house at Elvington in Yorkshire, there to live the comfortless existence of deserving poor relations. Ten months passed before the

regiment was again established, and the family re-embarked on their long and dismal odyssey.

'Perils and struggles' awaited them at every turn of the road. Twice they were nearly shipwrecked; children fell ill and died; Ensign Sterne never obtained advancement. But back in Ireland they were fortunate enough to stumble upon another rich relative, 'a collateral descendant from Archbishop Sterne, who took us all to his castle', kindly entertained them for a twelvemonth, 'and sent us to the regiment at Carrickfergus, loaded with kindnesses. . . .' It was during 1723 or 1724 that his father decided Laurence had reached an age when he should be educated in England, crossed the Irish Channel with him and placed him at a grammar school near Halifax. Henceforward father and son can have met but seldom. From Carrickfergus the regiment was moved to Londonderry; from Londonderry it was ordered to assist in the defence of Gibraltar; and there Roger Sterne, who in the meantime may or may not have been promoted to Lieutenant, fought the duel that probably shortened his days but was certainly an appropriate summing-up of his gallant impulsive career. For the duel was 'about a goose'. To whom the goose belonged, in what circumstances it appeared, if it was alive or dead, whether its quality or its price was questioned, or its ownership disputed, Sterne has not recorded, in the autobiographical notes that he jotted down for the amusement of his daughter, Lydia. But it was a goose that began the quarrel, which terminated in an affair of honour between Ensign—or Lieutenant—Sterne and a certain Captain Philips. Swords were the weapons selected, and the officers fought indoors. They fought with energy, Captain Philips running his opponent through the body with so well-directed and impetuous a thrust that (according to later accounts) 'he actually pinned him to the wall behind'. The Ensign's behaviour in this predicament was highly characteristic; for, 'with infinite presence of mind' and a becoming display of courtesy, he begged Philips to wipe off, 'before removing his instrument', any fragments of plaster which stuck to his sword-point and which 'it would be disagreeable to have introduced into his system'. Thanks perhaps to that inspiration, he recovered from his wound; but his constitution had received a shock that it never quite surmounted, and at Jamaica, his next post, he sickened with 'the country fever' which little by little reduced him to a

state of childhood. He did not complain but 'walked about continually'; then, one day, sat down in an armchair and quietly breathed his last.

Roger Sterne died, lonely and erratic as he had lived, during the spring of 1731, when his son was seventeen. To his family he left nothing, either in goods or prospects; but from his father Laurence received a legacy which, if less substantial, was also far less perishable—the recollection of a character that (unlike most such memories, even those to which we may believe, or may pretend, that we are most piously united) did not diminish or grow vague, but continued to exist and to develop in the depths of imagination. The 'little smart man' became an ancestral legend—'active to the last degree, in all exercises' . . . patient of fatigue and disappointments, of which it pleased God to give him full measure . . . in temper somewhat rapid, and hasty—but of a kindly, sweet disposition, void of all design; and so innocent in his own intentions that he suspected no one: so that you might have cheated him ten times a day, if nine had not been sufficient for your purpose.' Afterwards it was to be just his father's qualities—kindliness, guilelessness and humour, a sort of inbred, instinctive dandyism of thought and movement, exaggerated by a strain of individual oddity—that the novelist would exalt on the wings of the written word and from which he would constitute his personal code of feeling and imagining. For his father's image he had, in fact, the deepest sort of piety; but almost every æsthetic achievement that reaches its full fruition appears to have been fertilized by an underlying conflict; and in Sterne's life the element of conflict seems to have been supplied by his attitude towards his mother. Nuttle's step-daughter, now presumably much soured by the buffeting and bruising she had undergone in her vagrant married life, was a vulgar, tactless, grasping woman whom it would have been hard to love. Laurence, if he ever attempted it, proved singularly unsuccessful. All he asked was to be allowed to forget her. But that, alas, was not a privilege she was prepared to grant him.

Yet he was of a sensitive disposition and a readily affectionate turn. And just as we may think that, in Boswell's career, we can distinguish the effects of his failure to focus on Lord Auchinleck the unusually strong filial emotions with which nature had endowed him, so the more exaggerated aspect of Sterne's

emotionalism—the cult of feverish sensibility he would presently evolve—had, it may be, some connection with the remorse he felt because he was both ashamed of and disliked his mother. During the most impressionable period of youth he lived with his father's relatives, who made no effort to conceal—particularly when Mrs. Sterne appeared, needy and importunate, upon their doorsteps—their wholehearted condemnation of poor Roger's *mésalliance*. So Mrs. Sterne was packed quickly home to Ireland, there to exist on the profits of a small embroidery school she had started and her husband's military pension of twenty pounds a year. But Roger's son, Laurence, they treated fairly and generously. A Sterne cousin, the Squire of Elvington, assumed his father's place, educated him at Halifax and sent him up to Cambridge, where he entered Jesus College—not as a Gentleman Commoner, but as a Sizar—in 1733.

He was poor but unabashed, dependent but apparently not ungrateful. A good deal of constitutional ebullience—inherited perhaps from his mother's French and Irish blood: for from parents we hate, as from parents we love, we receive very often valuable and important legacies—sustained him through the difficult business of finding a place in the world. At Cambridge he seems to have been happy enough; his tutor, Dr. Caryl, 'a very good kind of man', let him have his way and, recognizing Sterne's singularity and that he had been 'born to travel out of the common road, and to get aside from the highway path', did not 'trouble him with trammels'. Among his contemporaries, he acquired a close and constant friend in John Hall (who later took the name of John Hall-Stevenson), 'an ingenious young gentleman', five years younger than himself and 'in person very handsome', a languid and leisured dandy, with whom he read Rabelais under the shade of an ancient walnut, called the Tree of Knowledge, in compliment to the study of good and evil that they pursued beneath its branches. But, whereas Hall-Stevenson was a youth of fortune, Sterne had not a shilling. The income his cousin allowed him was barely adequate; and by the time he left the University he had been obliged to borrow money. Moreover, his health was precarious: a sudden hæmorrhage, which aroused him one night during his last year at Cambridge, warned him of the disease that had already attacked his lungs.

Sterne (we are told) went down with the reputation of 'an odd

man, that had no harm in him; and who had parts if he could use them'. As a great-grandson of Archbishop Sterne it was natural that he should enter the Church; and in March 1737, having taken his degree some two months earlier, he was ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln (before whom he appeared with testimonials certifying 'his exemplary life, good morals and virtuous qualities') and appointed curate at St. Ives, a country town in Huntingdon. Thus his career as a priest opened quietly and easily; the slumbers of the Church of England during the fourth decade of the eighteenth century were still profound and peaceful; and wrapped in the torpid influence of that midland landscape where church bell answers church bell across miles of fen, and the flat damp plain stretches unbroken as far as the towers of Ely, humped against a glimmering sky on their abrupt, mysterious island, the atmosphere of Sterne's charge was, no doubt, doubly soporific. He remained in Huntingdon, however, less than two years; for though he had had a difference with his helpful cousin, caused, it would seem, by his debts at Cambridge, an equally helpful relative soon appeared in the person of his uncle, Dr. Jaques Sterne, Canon of York Minster and Archdeacon of Cleveland, the type of proud, grasping, worldly ecclesiastic, adding benefice to benefice and sinecure to sinecure, politician, diner-out and master of intrigue, who figured so largely in eighteenth-century life. Thanks to his uncle's help, Sterne now 'sat down quietly in the lap of the Church; and if it was not yet covered with a fringed cushion', a contemporary account assures us that 'twas not naked'. From his curacy at St. Ives he moved as a fully fledged member of the priesthood to the living at Sutton-in-the-Forest, a village a few miles north of York, situated in a region that had once been a royal hunting forest and still enclosed some shaggy remnants of heath and woodland. His headquarters he established in the city of York itself. Sterne's was pre-eminently a social genius; and during his lifetime the great English provincial centres, grouped round their vast mouldering cathedral churches, formed each a distinct metropolis, hives of clergy and the resort of country gentlemen, who thronged to the assizes and races, and whose wives and daughters found at the Assembly Rooms, where they danced indefatigably under crystal chandeliers, a not unsatisfying substitute for the gaieties of London. York, moreover, at this period, had its own company of players, and there were regular

performances at the playhouse of every type of drama. None of these advantages did Sterne neglect; the profession he had adopted, or to which he had resigned himself, had very little influence on the conduct of his private life; and, when the young parson fell in love during 1739, he had already acquired considerable local renown for humour and debauchery.

With the consideration of Sterne in love we plunge at once into the main problem of his peculiar personal temperament. He was aged twenty-five or twenty-six when he met and attached himself to Elizabeth Lumley; but his behaviour during this episode was so odd, so characteristic and so true to the pattern followed by his subsequent philanderings, that we gain no impression, as we observe him, of inexperience or immaturity. Indeed, his gyrations have a strangely instinctive air. Some inward compulsion seems to determine the curious amatory dance that he weaves about his mistress; and, though he is continually appealing to the deepest human emotions, there is something, if not quite mechanical, yet startlingly inhuman in the postures he adopts—fluttering in tremulous rounds, quivering suspended in rapt excitement, as do certain birds whose amatory displays would appear to be designed no less to stimulate their own erotic frenzy than to capture the attention and arouse the senses of a casually encountered female. Miss Lumley was not a native of York; but as a young woman possessed of a small independent fortune, the daughter of Robert Lumley, incumbent of a rich North Country living, who had left her an orphan some years earlier, she was accustomed to spend the winter months in the shadow of the cathedral, at the lodgings she occupied with her maid in Little Alice Lane. A trifle younger than Sterne, she was not remarkably attractive, but is reported to have been lively, graceful and intelligent. She had at least sufficient charm to form the centre of one of those elaborate imaginative evolutions that for Sterne were the necessary accompaniment of believing that he had fallen in love. Above all else, it was the surrounding atmosphere—what in French would be called the *ambiance*—that he sought for, cherished and endeavoured to prolong, in every adventure that engaged him, whether it was of love or lust. Imagination refined the senses: but the senses enflamed the brain. Two years were occupied by the parson's courtship; and of the letters written during that period a small sheaf has been preserved. They show us Sterne at his best and

worst; they reveal both the natural vivacity of his constitution and the debauches of feeling for feeling's sake into which an exceptional sensibility always tended to betray him. The effect is as highly strung as the expression is high-flown. Their eloquence may strike us as extraordinarily artificial; yet the choice of epithets and, even more markedly, the rhythm of the sentences—so simple, so smooth yet so ingenious in their harmony—confirm Gibbon's definition of style as an image of the writer's mind.

The ruling characteristics of that mind it would be hard to pin down—speculative, restless, impatient of restraint, passionately enamoured of words and devoted to the pursuit of ideas, but apt to pursue them rather for their appeal to the imagination than for their claims upon the intellect. The occasion of the correspondence was Miss Lumley's withdrawal from York, and from the attentions of a man whom she admitted that she liked but had declared she could not marry, to her sister's house in Staffordshire. During her absence Sterne occupied her vacant lodgings; and the society of her *confidante*, the talk of the maid who served him and the sight of the rooms and furniture to which she was accustomed, acted as a powerful stimulus on his already electric mood. At every turn, some fine needle-point of regret or desire lacerated his sensibility. His loneliness, he declared, was intolerable; the sight of the table laid reduced him to despair. 'One solitary plate, one knife, one fork, one glass!—I gave a thousand pensive penetrating looks at the chair thou hadst so often graced, in those quiet and sentimental repasts—then laid down my knife and fork, and took out my handkerchief, and clapped it across my face, and wept like a child.'

Having once, for the purposes of literature, taken out his handkerchief, at least so far as literature was concerned, he never properly put it back again. But there is another detail to be underlined in this wildly effusive passage. Here is the first recorded use by any English writer of a word on which Sterne was to base a large part of his celebrity and which from his work was to find its way into the vocabulary of every modern language: '*Sentimental*'! Was the word of Sterne's coinage? Or did he adopt it and, if so, from what source was it derived? The letter to Elizabeth Lumley must have been written before 1741. Yet, eight years later, Lady Bradshaigh, writing to another great professor of eighteenth-century sentiment, Samuel Richardson, inquires of

the novelist his definition of 'the meaning of the word *sentimental*, so much in vogue among the polite. . . Everything clever and agreeable is comprehended in that word. . .'¹ Walks, parties and characters might all be sentimental. Evidently, at that period, the expression had not begun to lose the bloom of fashionable unfamiliarity; and one is at a loss to understand what can have been the progress of the adjective during the intervening years. How did it travel from York (supposing that it originated there) to the polite world where its occurrence puzzled Lady Bradshaigh? Did Sterne give it to Hall-Stevenson, and did his friend, on some leisurely peregrination from which, unlike Sterne's, his means did not debar him, cast the seed in London? We shall watch its growth and flowering: we shall observe Sterne, as a high priest of sentimentality, help to introduce a cult of lachrymose divagation that was to sweep across the world; no plant, no animal parasite, introduced from a foreign climate, has had a more surprising history. Meanwhile the origins of the term remain mysterious. We see it drop from the tip of Sterne's excited pen, as in an atmosphere of high-pitched feminine solicitude, compounded of the attentions of Miss Lumley's *confidante* and of Fanny, the beloved's maid-servant, who administered doses of hartshorn when his grief grew too oppressive, he dashes off page after page of melancholy expostulation. A new word has fallen into the human consciousness, to denote the most rarefied extravagances of feeling of which the Augustan Age was capable. Its development at a later time was the development of Sterne himself.

Leaving the mystery of the word, we revert to the odd reality of Sterne's protracted courtship. Miss Lumley eventually returned to York and, carried away perhaps by the sentimental violence to which she had been exposed during the last few months, announced that she was sick of a consumption and had not long to live. Parenthetically, she added that she had left to her 'dear Laurey' all her little fortune. In the course of the affecting scene that followed, her resistance finally collapsed; Sterne, overwhelmed with gratitude, again proposed that she should marry him; and their wedding was celebrated in York

¹ Mrs. Barbauld: Richardson's Correspondence, Vol. IV. p. 282. The second instance recorded by the Oxford English Dictionary is in a letter from Horace Walpole to Mann of 1752.

Minster on 30 March 1741. No sooner were they married than the Sternes removed to his parsonage at Sutton-in-the-Forest; and there for the next twenty years the 'parson who once delighted in debauchery' (to quote his wife's cousin, the future Mrs. Montagu) led the life, with some individual variations, of a contemporary parish priest, who farmed and gardened and dined at the squire's house, with an ill-paid curate to lighten the labour of burying and christening. Thanks to Mrs. Sterne's small fortune, the parsonage itself was furnished and repaired; peaches and nectarines grew in the walled garden, apples on the espaliers, fine blue plums in the orchard; seven cows grazed the parson's fields, and a large company of geese picked their way across the stubble. Another living presently increased his income; and in combination with certain members of the local gentry Sterne was able to arrange the enclosure of a large expanse of common land, by rights belonging to the village; for, at the best of times a little uneven, his sensibility did not extend to the wrongs of the labouring masses.

On his country neighbours the impression Sterne made was singular and puzzling. A lean man dressed all in black, riding a horse as lean as himself, he drew after him every eye as he went jogging through a hamlet. The villagers, leaving their work or their play, gazed after him till he had disappeared with stolid disapproval, while the little boys assembled and ran beside him. All this, as he later informed the public, he bore composedly. In spite of his accesses of feverish emotionalism, the face that for the most part he showed to the world was humorous and cynical, the face of a man who was both well aware of, and perhaps capitalized, his oddity, with a sardonic smile wrinkling his hollow consumptive cheeks. It was thus that he appeared to his friends in the cathedral city. They knew him as the parson who, besides preaching an occasional sermon in the cathedral, where his uncle's influence had procured him a prebend's stall, was at home in the theatre and among the coffee houses and devoted his attention at different times, and in a good-natured desultory fashion, to the arts of painting and music. Of painting he was particularly fond; and there has survived the engraving of a picture, executed in conjunction with his friend Thomas Bridges, which shows Bridges as a mountebank, painted by Sterne, and Sterne as the quack's macaroni or clowning assistant, the second and livelier portrait

being by Bridges' hand. With mephistophelean eyebrows, high-bridged sensual nose and large mouth turned up at the corners in a thin-lipped derisive grin, Sterne stands poised against a background of eighteenth-century York. A lively crowd of citizens fills the background of the picture—young women in long bodices, caps and kerchiefs, men in three-cornered hats and waisted, wide-skirted coats, bearded Jews (of whom York then possessed a considerable population), a blind beggar led by his dog and a musician who turns the handle of his hurdy-gurdy. The scene is placid and provincial, in a setting of ancient houses. But no cathedral city was ever the seat of entirely unruffled calm; and in 1747 a violent quarrel broke out between Sterne and his uncle, who up to this time had zealously encouraged his advancement and, in return, had made use of his services as a political pamphleteer, caused either by Sterne's refusal to continue 'such dirty work', which he considered far beneath him or, according to some accounts, by a dispute over the Doctor's 'favourite mistress'. Jacques Sterne, at all events, became an embittered enemy, denounced him as 'ungrateful and unworthy' in a letter to the Archdeacon, embarrassed, annoyed and thwarted him by every means within his power, and even enlisted against his nephew the support of the Archbishop himself.

Had the battle been confined to minor questions of ecclesiastical preferment—the Commissaryship of the Peculiar Court of Pickering and Pocklington, and other similar posts that Sterne coveted and to which his uncle was now determined he should not attain—Sterne's reputation might have suffered comparatively little damage, and the buzz of angry clergymen have long ago subsided. Unfortunately, in his efforts to discredit Laurence, Jacques Sterne made unscrupulous use of an earlier family quarrel and revived the whole distressful story of his relations with his mother. It was not a story that deserved resurrection or public exploitation. None of the parties involved had behaved with very much nobility; but Laurence, at least, had determined that, though his feelings might not be affectionate, his behaviour should be decent; and when Mrs. Sterne, on learning that her son was married to an heiress, had hurried over from Ireland to demand her due, bringing with her Sterne's unmarried sister, Catherine, he had first attempted to disabuse them and begged them to return home, then doled out such small sums as his means permitted—

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twenty guineas here and another thirty there—and had shouldered his obligations in a resigned, if not in a cheerful, spirit. Mrs. Sterne (even Dr. Sterne had to agree) was both ‘clamorous and rapacious’. One of nature’s poor relations, she continually demanded assistance but, as often as any scheme was devised for her benefit, proved impossible to satisfy. She arrived on a visit at her son’s parsonage, considerably outstayed her welcome and departed grumbling, with the little present that, as she left the house, Mrs. Sterne the younger pressed into her palm. Catherine Sterne had a high opinion of her social dignity and flouted the suggestion either that she should become a governess or allow herself to be articed to the trade of mantua-maker. Having permitted the plan to go forward and her sister-in-law to write on her behalf to various acquaintances, she suddenly rejected these proposals ‘with the utmost scorn, telling me (Sterne informed his uncle in an indignant letter) I might send my own children to service when I had any, but for her part, as she was the daughter of a gentleman, *she would not disgrace* herself but would live as such’. Thus the situation had continued since 1742, Mrs. Sterne complaining, the Doctor intervening, Laurence, with a more or less good grace, contributing to his mother’s support ‘what he could conveniently spare’; till, some eight years after her arrival in England, Dr. Sterne determined to crush his nephew by a single decisive stroke. Having committed the intolerable pair to a public institution, he circulated the report that Sterne had cast them off, that he had refused to provide the ten pounds that would have saved his mother from imprisonment. For a man of feeling no position could have been more invidious. What, no doubt, made the scandal particularly galling was Sterne’s recognition that the large and kindly attitude, that as a general rule he professed towards his fellows, in this special and important instance had failed completely to materialize. Where his mother was concerned, his feelings declined to operate. He might have been fair, it was true: he had not been over-generous. And, with angry and vulgar emphasis, he reminded Dr. Sterne, in a letter of many pages justifying his behaviour, that, while his wife was a person ‘whose birth and education would ill enable her to struggle in the world’ were she deprived of the independent income he was endeavouring to safeguard, his mother, ‘though it would give me pain enough to report it upon

any other occasion, . . . was the daughter of no other than a poor sutler who followed the camp in Flanders' and had been 'neither born nor bred to the expectation of a fourth part of what the Government allows her. . . .' Therefore, she should make the best of it and return to her embroidery school. The subsequent history of the elder Mrs. Sterne—and there is reason to believe that she died soon afterwards—still remains obscure. She passed out of Sterne's existence, leaving a permanent trace—perhaps a scar upon his conscience, certainly an odour of scandal from which, even posthumously, he never quite escaped. In every cult of feeling such as Sterne professed there is an element of hypocrisy, since it ignores the intermittences of the human heart, the numerous 'dead notes', so to speak, in the range of the emotional keyboard; and the peculiar vivacity and picturesqueness of Sterne's emotional life encouraged very often a kind of literary make-believe which assumed curious and, now and then, slightly repulsive forms.

TO BE CONTINUED

VIOLET TREFUSIS

TRIPTYCH

THE land of pickles and tinned vegetables, draughts and rattling windows, 'dirty cads' and 'jolly good sorts'; hundred per cent He-men, and a hundred per cent He-women; of snubs and snobs, of smuts and guts; of area railings and window-boxes, of corns and 'dentures', of intrepid old maids and blushing giants; the land of placid parks and aspiring suburbs, of ghosts and curses, of drunkards and ascetics, of magnanimity and promiscuity, of beautiful children and witches, of gentleness and depravity, innocence and trust, of business acumen and poetry, of gallantry and modesty, of honesty and prejudice, practical jokes and horse-play, puns and nicknames, gentility and class consciousness; the land of birds and flowers, fields and hedges, sport and loyalty, teas and breakfasts, inarticulateness and repression, whimsy and puerility, tradition and pageantry; the land whose National Anthem is: 'For he's a jolly good fellow', where it matters *how* you eat, rather than *what* you eat, where

your accent is more important than your vocabulary, where octogenarians are automatically canonised, where advertisements either represent toothless grandparents or their toothless grandchildren, where you may neglect your wife, but not your dog, where you may be eccentric, but not original, where you must be loyal to a friend rather than faithful to a woman. The land of hospitality and no manners, of hot baths, and cold comfort, where the place in the heart matters more than the 'place at table'.

The land for men and children, dogs and flowers.

II

The land of accelerated voices, faces, minds. The land of vituperation and irascibility, of malice and criticism, of wit and satire, of mothers-in-law and 'tantes à heritage'; the land of 'dots' and law-suits, 'enterrement de première classe', and 'lettres de faire part'; the land of plains and poplars, of light and symmetry, of style and synthesis; the land of coffee and 'croissants', wood strawberries and a hundred cheeses, the land of black tobacco and matches which never strike; the land of derailed trains and devilish taxis; of perennial black (especially for travelling), hairy warts and tumours, stuffiness and 'tisanes', the land of ingenuity and improvisation, the land of waxed parquets and stilted furniture, form and formality, taste and tact, xenophobia and vindictiveness; the land of hideous gardens and beautiful perspectives, fountains and statues, discipline and economy, conversation and eloquence. The land of matriarchs and mistresses, family feuds and 'bas de laine', technique and tactics, sense and sensibility, impetus and panache. The land of ruthlessness and caprice, elegance and epicureanism, the land where people are urban rather than bucolic, gregarious rather than friendly, where they prefer Form to Colour, Chic to Beauty, Revolution to Change; the land where you may joke about almost anything except your mother and, still less, your grandmother, where Excess seldom spells Success, where Culture, the family, decorum, protocol, prosperity, are accorded the maximum respect; the land where it is most enjoyable to be: (a) a woman, (b) an artist, (c) a cook, (d) a politician, (e) a dressmaker; where it is least enjoyable to be: (a) an old maid, (b) a recluse, (c) a fool, (d) a 'jeune fille'.

III

The land of sun and solos, bells and smells, Quirinals and urinals, beauty and squalor; the land of processions and conspiracies, nepotism and calumny; the clergyman's honeymoon, Miss Protheroc's romance, and 'my great-aunt's water-colours'. The land of old maids and old masters, speculators, and the senile great. The land of 'clagues' and 'cliques', clichés and déclassés, palatial stations and crumbling palaces; the land of lizard and nightingale, of cascades and mosquitoes, volcanoes and grottoes, rodomontade and rhetoric; the land of Emperor and pimp, priest and impresario, individual bravery and collective cowardice. The land of Culture and Ignorance, classicism and bad taste, tortoiseshell and coral, marble and cypress; the land of Religion and Superstition, Cupid and cupidity, vendetta and 'undue influence', the land of satellite and sycophant, prime donne and marionettes, frugality and gaiety, perfumed poisons, the deadly handshake.

The land of 'dolce far tutto', of tips, touts, and tourists; where it is more blessed to receive than to give, to deceive than to live, where noise is a form of snobbishness,¹ where people know how to acquire money, but not how to spend it, where the peasant is a gentleman, and the gentleman a peasant, where it is most enjoyable to be (a) a 'condottiere', (b) a handsome man, (c) a rich woman; where it is least enjoyable to be (a) a blue-stockings, (b) old, (c) a bird.

SELECTED NOTICE

TOOTHPASTE IN BLOOMSBURY

If you compare rape with seduction, one thing that strikes you is its relative intellectual honesty. The raper at least knows what he is aiming at—that is, satisfaction—whereas the seducer, when he is not an impotent trifle, is often a neurotic working off a Freudian grudge against his grandmother. This proposition seems not less nonsensical than Mr. Orwell's glorification of the 'intellectual honesty' of commercial advertising compared with the (according to him) lifelessness or neurosis or grudging of his own adopted profession, political propaganda. All propaganda, commercial or political, is biased: it gives one side of the picture, and therefore not the whole truth. To praise (as Mr. Orwell does) the 'honesty' of the toothpaste advertiser because he

¹To witness: The cult of the cut-out.

'cold-bloodedly' uses the most effective means to his one end, money, and to condemn the political propagandist because (again according to Mr. Orwell) 'when he is not a lifeless hack, he is often a neurotic working off a private grudge' seems, apart from rather wild generalizing, to show a confusion of ideas between what is right and what is expedient. Ruthless money-grubbing, however efficient, is not more 'intellectually honest' than non-money-grubbing conviction, however personal: and you don't, at any rate in the long run, 'sell' political ideas by methods successfully employed for toothpaste. The argument with which Mr. Orwell crowns his dialectical house of cards is that *Beggar My Neighbour* fails to 'sell' Indian freedom to its potential buyers, the British public, because it contains a passage which may offend them. To this there are three replies, technical, factual and ethical. Technically, shocks and even insults may be first-rate advertising: witness body-odour, halitosis, and queries on every bus as to whether you have cleaned your teeth. Factually, with the exception of Mr. Orwell I have not so far found among my English audiences or readers a single soul who was 'offended' by comparisons between the Indian way of life and ours: on the contrary, such details never fail to arouse great interest. Ethically, while it may be commercially inexpedient to reveal the ingredients of a toothpaste, it is politically wise and even necessary to reveal the feelings of a subject race. And the feelings of a subject race are necessarily more sensitive than those of a dominating one. The wealthy landlord can afford to be amused at Socialist gibes: if the gibe is the other way round, there is an uproar. When Mr. Orwell re-writes the passage in which I compared Indian ways favourably with English ones, and makes it vice-versa (adding that Englishmen, although nowadays they don't write such things, still think them), his words will undoubtedly offend Indians in a way that mine could never offend Englishmen. Cats looking at kings are not kings looking at cats.

Mr. Orwell has fired a great number of arrows at me, and he is a skilful shot. I ought by rights to be bleeding as tragically as any St. Sebastian. Actually, the arrows give me a pleasing—here Mr. Orwell would say masochistic—glow. That is partly because I am glad that my book should be noticed at such length by so brilliant a writer in such an admirable publication: partly because so violent a protest does some honour to my arguments. I suspect that Mr. Orwell, who agrees exactly, and says so, with my conclusions about India, hates my methods of approach to those conclusions and is infuriated because he cannot find better ones: at least, that is how his argument strikes me. And it is worth considering this point, if only because Mr. Orwell, occupying a position in the Indian section of the B.B.C., is directly concerned with methods of approach. I should dearly like to wean him from his belief in the intellectual honesty of toothpaste. But before making this attempt, I must try to remove the poison from some at least of his many arrows.

I am, it seems, Russophobe, anti-Socialist, and contemptuous of the 'working-class conception of Socialism': I am 'uncritically reverent' of everything Oriental: I do not want Indian independence: I desire to work off quarrels with All-India Radio, the Government of India, and the British Press: not only do I want a negotiated peace, but I plead for 'surrender to Hitler': I am in a 'comfortable and privileged position': and I am a 'parlour Anarchist', whatever that may be. It is a formidable indictment. Russophobe. I went to

Russia nine years ago because I was fascinated by the Soviet experiment: I had a whale of a time, was treated with the greatest hospitality and kindness, and so fell in love with the beauty and exhilaration of Moscow that for two pins I'd have chucked my Indian assignment in order to stay there. The two pins were withheld partly because, while admiring the Kremlin, I was near as a toucher annihilated by a string of black-windowed cars, issuing from the great gate at forty miles an hour to the accompaniment of a red light and a clanging bell, and containing, so I understood, Mr. Stalin and others. If I found some things in Russia repellant and some comic, I also found quite as many charming and intelligent people as elsewhere. Anti-Socialist? As far as I know, the 'working-class conception of Socialism' ranges from extreme Conservatism down to a desire to grab any property in sight: between lie infinite gradations. My conception of Socialism is something which gives as much importance to the Indian coolie starving in Calcutta as to the Beveridge plan: a working-class of one country which lives on the exploitation of the working-class of another is doing the same thing as the capitalist one step above. Uncritically reverent of everything Oriental: am I? I have said in my book that I hold no brief for Indians, that many of them treated me abominably, that India has her full share of rogues and robbers, and that she will not be happy in a moment because she is free. But Mr. Orwell is partly right, because he has not read my book carefully. I wrote in it that it was a biased book, and so it is. In writing *Beggar My Neighbour* I did my best to get inside the skin of an Indian and to write, though still as an Englishman, what he might feel. I may have done it badly; I still feel that it is something that needs doing. I will gladly confess to Mr. Orwell that, personally, I have always disliked, and felt uncomfortable in, India and the Orient: that does not prevent me from thinking that an Indian has a perfect right to revere Oriental ways and habits, and that those may be as good as, even better than, our own. Do I desire to 'work off quarrels'? Perhaps to some extent we all do. I had the privilege of building and naming A.I.R.; its personnel are, I hope, my friends—at least I am theirs; the feeling I have for it, as far as I can judge, is one of affectionate interest. I certainly fought with the Government of India for every penny I spent and every inch of progress we made: I think (as does apparently Mr. Orwell) that it would be better swept away in favour of a National Government: I don't think I have any quarrel with it—after all, it gave me a superb chit, as well as the C.I.E., when I left it. As for the British Press, I have a quarrel with those sections of it which persistently ignore or twist the Indian problem, thus furthering ignorance and misunderstanding: but perhaps it isn't their fault: in the logic of the toothpaste-advertiser, India isn't 'news'.

These are unimportant, because personal, arrows. But the questions of negotiated peace and privileged position, mixed up with parlour anarchy and Mr. Orwell's pet obsession, the intellectual unconsciously or mischievously playing into the hands of the imperialist—these raise wider issues. In discussing whether Gandhi will be 'an inspiration', Mr. Orwell uses a striking phrase. 'When one thinks of the creatures who *are* venerated by humanity it does not seem particularly unlikely.' Words are elastic, and I may mistake Mr. Orwell's intention. But his use of the word 'creatures' suggests that humanity's

veneration is wrongly directed, and the word 'veneration' usually attaches to men of ideas—Christ, Buddha, Socrates, Shakespeare, whom you will. If he considers that humanity's veneration has been mistaken in the past, as it will be mistaken in the case of Gandhi, I do not know whom he would wish us to venerate: perhaps none, or maybe the toothpaste advertiser. But the great adventure of humanity, greater than any war, is the adventure of ideas: intelligent men and women the world over have been and will be preoccupied above all by the search for a better society and a better way of life. We can hardly say that we have discovered it. And those who contribute ideas whose fundamental goodness can be recognized, even though the ideas may seem impossible to reconcile with society as we know it, will be venerated. We recognize the essential rightness of the Sermon on the Mount, or, if you like, the Ten Commandments: we know well enough that if we put them into practice, if we do not covet, if we are meek, if we truly love our neighbour, we make a perfect society. It is true that neither Eastern nor Western man has been able to do so: it is also true that this type of thinking has mainly come to the West from the East. Mr. Orwell and others of his persuasion are at pains to prove that the East is as bad as the West, and that to extol the East is an infallible sign of Fascism and pacificism. It is as easy in wartime to stick these damaging labels on to anyone you don't like, as to smear a Jew's robe with yellow. The East is, at the moment, a convenient illustration, because over a fairly long period of history the best and biggest wars have been conducted by Europeans, inside or outside Europe: tomorrow the reverse may be the case. The mythos, as Mr. Orwell calls it, is not of the East because it is the East, but of a set of challenging ideas, embraced and rejected by humanity throughout history, of which Gandhi happens to be (as I think at least) the most sincere exponent in our time.

Those ideas will not be dispelled by any number of Orwells. Equally, any number of Fieldens may believe in them but fail to practise them. That I am in a comfortable and privileged position is Mr. Orwell's sharpest arrow: I grant the wound. Detachment from possession is, I am convinced, the best, possibly the only, way for humanity to avoid war: I suspect that it may also be the key to the most satisfactory way of living. But I was brought up to like possessions, and I like them. Must I, even if on the wrong side of the camel's eye, remain dumb? I may get through it some day. Meanwhile I admire Gandhi, not in the least because he is Indian but because he is a human being who has made himself a world figure without force or weapons, and is indifferent to possessions and comfort and even life itself. And if I am asked whether I want a negotiated peace, I cannot do better than to quote the penultimate paragraph of the Congress Resolution of 1939:

'The working Committee wishes to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the Japanese people, or the German people, or any other people, but they have a deep-rooted quarrel with the systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to the victory of one people over another, or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all people in all countries, when the world is freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.'

That is an expression of something which most decent men feel, more or

less, according to their circumstances and associations and the amount of propaganda that they swallow. Democracy, if it is to be any good at all, must be world-wide: and world-wide democracy cannot be born of the totalitarian conception of Victory, of Might, of the Dictate. A peace treaty may be bad or good: its endurance depends not upon whether it is negotiated or dictated, but upon whether it takes place at a moment when fair dealing and foresight can function freely. Mr. Orwell whips himself up into such a pet over words like negotiation and disaffection that his pen flies from insinuation to sheer misrepresentation, and he has the effrontery to state that *Beggar My Neighbour* contains 'pleas for surrender to Hitler'. It doesn't: that's all there is to be said. But why all this foam and fury? Mr. Orwell is, I am sure, sincere: he is also a brilliant writer and an influential propagandist. Therefore, it is worth asking what has brought his eloquent lance into such irritable action, and whether by any chance he is tilting at windmills.

His main targets seem to be four. First, Parlour Anarchy: the plea for the simple life, based on dividends. Second, the mischief of any propaganda not conducted on toothpaste-advertising lines. Third, the 'disaffected' intellectual who has (according to Mr. Orwell) so many complexes—including guilt, privilege, resentment, transferred nationalism, chauvinism, scepticism and 'no desire to escape' (qualities not perhaps confined to intellectuals)—that he lands up as pacifist *and* Fascist. Fourth, the hideous alliance of, as he calls it, 'impossibilism' and reaction: the fact, as Mr. Bernard Shaw put it, that the further Left you go, the nearer you get to the Right.

These ninepins can be shied at. A simple life based on dividends is what ninety-nine per cent of humanity naturally and rightly desires: dividends is only one name for security. And security is available to all if a simple life is lived: not, however, if life is complicated by advertising rackets of the toothpaste kind, and twisted into a hideous game of grab and envy, in which abysmal poverty must compensate colossal wealth. The 'intellectual honesty' of commercial advertising is a ninepin which never stood up at all. The 'disaffected intellectual'—and not he alone by any means—is merely the man or woman who struggles to discover a better conception of society and looks beyond the temporary and fanciful scales of values imposed—perhaps inevitably—by war and war propaganda. The intellectual is seldom either Fascist or pacifist: intellectuals are conspicuous by their absence in the ranks of both. The intellectual may choose to fight with bayonet or with brain or to stand apart: he cannot choose but *think*. And in thinking he must probe the values, however temporarily sacrosanct, which have led human nature to condone and practise mass murder. As to 'impossibilism', what is it? A hundred years ago it would have been a man speaking through the air to the whole world, or photographs taken in darkness, or Russia an equalitarian State. And in the flux of today nothing, surely, is impossible: not even Christian living—though that, for Mr. Orwell, may be 'reactionary'.

But, when all that is said, there remains in Mr. Orwell's writing a rancour which is hard to explain. The labels which he himself fabricates, infuriate him. Can it be that, compromising between his principles and his bread-and-butter, he has a special envy of those who don't or needn't? He tells us, bravely enough, that England must get off India's back, that the Viceroy must go, the

India Office be wound up: it is 'the only decent gesture'. But, he adds, this can't be done because the Government (for which he himself does propaganda) won't have it. So what? So, says Mr. Orwell, you must not frighten or shock anyone (except of course the 'disaffected intellectual'), you must 'win over' the British public gradually and politely, as toothpaste advertisers do, and all will be well. So might some phantom George Orwellski, Russian Government propagandist of 1916, have written, urging that Lenin would be welcomed back to Petrograd and political prisoners crowned with laurels, if only everyone were perfectly polite about it.

No, Mr. Orwell, it does not work that way: you cannot hunt and run. I am not, and never was, under any illusion that books like *Beggar My Neighbour* stir more than the faintest of faint ripples: I wrote it because I felt impelled to say what I sincerely felt about India, and for no other reason. My book will leave as indifferent the indifferent British public as Orwell's literary broadcasts the starving people of Bengal. Words don't fill bellies or alter arrogant minds. Yet words as they accumulate do modify opinion, the quicker if their impact be sharp and timely. I can assure Mr. Orwell that the mass of British opinion is already converted to his views and mine: that is, it wants to see India free: but it does not and cannot act because the situation is distorted and obscured by the powers which propaganda serves. Amery plays down the famine, plays up the crimes of a Provincial Government: Cripps declares that constitutional changes are 'impossible' in wartime: Churchill states that Congress does not represent the Hindu masses. The average man, already preoccupied by the complications of his daily life and the immediate issues of war, takes such pronouncements as expert, and dismisses India as something that must, by its nature, unhappily drift. And in such an opinion he is no doubt strengthened by Mr. Orwell. To me it seemed more necessary to say, even if with only a small, small voice, that the drift was to chaos: and present conditions in India bear out that view. Neither our war effort nor our prestige will gain by Indian famine: and Indian famine is a direct result of the policy of drift. Mr. Orwell, subscribing as it seems to me to the policy of drift, condemns my book as a mischievous one, which will be acclaimed by the Left and welcomed, for different reasons, by the Right. He puts it, I think, too high. But his own article, from a pen so much better-known and eloquent than mine, will certainly show all Indians who read it how profoundly Mr. Orwell despises them: and that, I imagine, while it may be acclaimed by his fellow-propagandists, is a service which will be greatly welcomed in Berlin.

LIONEL FIELDEN

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir,

I hope you will allow me to reply in your columns to the remarks on anarchism in your September 'Comment', which arose from your quotation from an article of mine in *View* (New York).

As you appear to accept and, indeed, turn into a compliment what I said

in *View* concerning HORIZON, I do not propose to justify my statement on that occasion. But I feel it is important to correct certain misunderstandings concerning anarchism which might arise from reading your article, and to explain the attitude of the British anarchists towards contemporary events.

The three most harmful passages are, in my opinion, as follows. Firstly, that in which you define an anarchist as a 'revolutionary Liberal'. Secondly, that in which you declare that the English anarchists 'might become a political party'. Thirdly, that in which you appear to identify the anarchist with 'the individualist'. These statements represent an attitude which, if less crude than that of those who regard anarchists as bomb throwers, is no less erroneous in its representation of the theory of anarchism as it is held by all who regard it seriously as a practical social doctrine.

1. Anarchism is not revolutionary Liberalism, for it is fundamentally opposed to the social forms and institutions which Liberalism has always in practice admitted and, indeed, upheld. Liberalism admits government, parliamentary representation, set codes of law, property rights. In fact, it upholds both in theory and in practice all the essential manifestations of authority and power. Its reforms are merely palliative and exist within the authoritarian structure—are, indeed, introduced through the organs of authority and tend to increase their power ('Liberal' legislation has always strengthened the bureaucracy and thus defeated its own general purpose). Liberalism is the left wing of a social tendency which has Fascism for its right extremity. Anarchism, on the contrary, denies authority and power in all their forms. It is therefore as strongly opposed to liberal democracy as it is to Fascism, because it sees that the Liberal, in his acceptance of the principle of power, accepts in practice the corruption that arises inevitably from the exercise of power and turns even the best ruler into the enemy of the people. The anarchists regard democratic government as an impractical myth, for the best system of representation would result in the formation of a governing class preoccupied with power. But were representative government practicable, we should still oppose it on principle, because we regard government even by the will of the majority as an obnoxious limitation of individual liberty.

2. Anarchists, not being concerned with political power, do not desire to be a political party. They differ from politicians in that, while the latter (even when they are sincere) pursue the humanly impossible goal of imposing happiness on mankind from above by means of authority, the anarchists pursue the (*pace* Orwell) humanly possible end of inducing social happiness by means of free co-operation among free men. The rôle of the anarchist is, therefore, neither to legislate nor to lead, but to teach the people how they can best live without the unwelcome assistance of rulers and politicians.

3. Individualism, in its crude form, has been rejected by every responsible anarchist from Bakunin onwards. Anarchism in its developed forms teaches that the individual can, indeed, only attain freedom of development by realizing the social responsibility and interdependence of men.

In conclusion, I will turn to your remarks on the anarchist attitude to the war. You suggest, rightly, that Durruti and Ascaso would not have lain down under Hitler. Nor do anarchists in this country propose such inaction. But they deny that Nazism can be defeated by military means, which introduce

the very evils they pretend to attack, or by the workers supporting one side in the factional fights of their enemies, the ruling classes of all lands. You maintain this is not an imperialist war, but in this you are refuted by plain historical facts. The ruling class of this country, including Churchill, supported Hitler when he appeared merely as the enemy of freedom. Not until German imperialist ambitions become an obvious danger to their own interests did they turn reluctantly against the Nazis. Nor must it be overlooked that this war has served as a fine opportunity for depriving the workers of rights gained in centuries of patient struggle and for imposing on them a serfdom to the state which is less rigorous than that of the Nazis only because it is so little resisted. A brief review of the laws against the individual which have been passed by Government departments (Parliament is rarely consulted) would easily destroy *your* fallacy that this is a war for freedom. It is interesting to note that one of your recent contributors, Koestler, declared the true nature of the war in an article in *Time* early this year, when he said 'The coming victory will be a conservative victory and lead to a conservative peace'.

We regard Nazism only as an extreme example of the disease of government which afflicts all lands. British rule in India is little better when it parallels Nazi atrocities with artificial famines in which thousands die of hunger. Men will not be made free by the destruction of Nazism and the establishment of a European hegemony of Anglo-American capital, but by the overthrow of all power, and to this end they should attack authority where they encounter it.

Yours truly,

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Dear Cyril,

It was a pity that Woodcock used the word Liberalism as though it were a *mot de combat* comparable with Capitalist and Fascist. He made it appear as though the quarrel between Anarchism and the type of artistic conception of society which some contributors to HORIZON seem to hold was based on the rejection of Liberalism by Anarchists. But when you suggest that we oppose the war (a) out of ignorance of the true facts about the state of affairs in Europe and (b) through concentration on the class struggle, you should be answered. George Orwell in his review says that the younger writers are turning to pacifism and anarchism out of a desire to find solace in the impossible, and there is a very large measure of truth in that. But the problem goes deeper—we have had to settle the immediate questions What shall we do? and What shall we write?; and whether you call us anarchists or not, circumstances have forced us into making a decisive rejection both of the general aims of our fellow men as represented by the Allies and the Axis and of the ideas of artistic responsibility which HORIZON has advocated from time to time.

We do not reject the war out of concentration on the Class Struggle. Nobody in his senses can deny the reality of the Class Struggle, but, so far as we are concerned, it has ceased to be the central issue. The real struggle is against society—that is to say, against the idea that a body, State or party is entitled to make the same sort of demands on the individual (especially, since

that is our vested interest, upon the artist), as individuals are entitled to make upon one another. Our experience of classless societies is that their demands are likely to be even more excessive than those of grossly privileged States, since they demand active conformity by sanctions other than plain starvation. We are not irresponsible—we owe responsibility to all individuals and to no groups, because the conduct of all those organized groups of which we have experience, the Primrose League, the Communist Party and the Anarchists notwithstanding, approximates very closely to that of lunatics. I mean that word literally—adherence to society and allowance of its claims in preference to those of individuals is productive of genuine lunacy. A good friend of mine, whose private life is blameless, and who would normally risk it to save a dog, spent last night describing to me, with a sense of moral rectitude bordering on satisfaction, how he assisted in the total destruction of a city where he had a good many friends. I have seen equally good friends turned to Jew-baiting and swastika-wagging maniacs while retaining their private qualities. Once one allows a sense of duty to some acephalous, and therefore irrational body, to obliterate one's responsibility to individual persons, then it is possible to commit all the filthiest of bestialities out of a high sense of moral duty. When Orwell says that the crimes are the work of sleepwalkers, he is saying about the truest thing HORIZON ever published. Yes, the Nazis bash Jews and shoot hostages out of a high sense of moral duty—it pays to remember that.

We are neutral in this war because we are responsible, not because we are irresponsible. Neutrality is not the refusal to condemn injustice but the insistence that the same standards shall apply to the conduct of both sides. Where we have attacked HORIZON, it has been for providing the lullaby to which the sleepwalkers move—credulous, and more dangerous to sanity than most such propaganda because sincerer and more subtle. We reject the war because it is a fraud, and because on both sides the impulse to a responsible attitude to others is being deliberately capitalized. The B.B.C. a day or two ago described the Germans attaching a land-mine to an injured baby. That is precisely what is being done today. The ghastly sufferings of the Jews are invoked not because the Government has the smallest desire to help them (Zieglbogin committed suicide, you remember, on our doorstep), but because altruism and human suffering are the only bait that will make us acquiesce in what we are expected to do, namely, inflict equal horrors on equally innocent people. We do not need to be stimulated in our hatred of tyranny by the sort of tripe which fills the White Papers of atrocities. We know militarism, anti-semitism, and State-worship for what they are, and we know what they are capable of. 'Then why do you not fight?' Because the war is not against these things. There is only one victim in every war, and he is the same as the stormtrooper—he is both the hostage and the man who shoots him. The youth of today is shoved by the crupper onto a stage where a melodrama is being played, and the particular team of thimblerriggers who, by the accident of his birth, have control over his life, tell him to act up to his principles. Someone is being raped or murdered—the villain has whiskers, he is unmistakable. At every step the would-be hero takes to the rescue, crash goes his foot into an equally innocent face. By the time he is half-way across his hands are as red as the villain's; the first victim is

forgotten, the original objective has been skilfully removed from sight—a new one is shown him, and again he is told to act up to his principles in a manifestly just cause. The victim is yelling for help—he hurries, crushing more people like himself, or being crushed: by now he is indistinguishable from his adversaries, and new heroes arriving on the scene are having him pointed out to them as a villain. So the bloodstained panto continues, and any demur is met with ‘But look, can’t you see injustice is being done?’ Injustice is done everywhere, and we will not add to it by putting out lives and brains into the hands of reactionaries, fools and murderers. We are not asked to save mankind—we are asked to massacre innocent civilians and to help maintain a vicious blockade. To say that our enemies are more brutal is no argument. You can’t have it both ways—Lidice was the work of inhuman sub-men and Hamburg a regrettable necessity in the great Liberal Crusade for Civilization. Both were bestial and contemptible crimes. But Hamburg was not the work of inhuman sub-men: it was done by courageous, sincere and enlightened people, our brothers and friends, acting as good citizens. It is the flight into a rigmarole about saving civilization (for Churchill, Amgot, and the Calcutta Famines, from Hitler, Dachau, and anti-semitism: I am not equating them, and nobody but a rogue would argue that one is equal to the other) instead of recognizing that if we are responsible to anyone, it is to those to whom our actions, the bombs and bullets propelled by us personally, will destroy, that we have responsibility—which marks a man truly irresponsible. And Fascism, beastly as it is, is simply Society writ large. Liberal values are not preserved by fighting. Even if we were not governed by men whose chief aim is to maim and subject the working class, and even if the class war were won, Liberalism would still not be able to survive in the mind of a man who acquiesced in the organized murder of his more or less responsible fellows.

Liberalism as well as anarchism rests on non-obedience. The real victims who are themselves the oppressors are the people of all countries, the sleepwalkers, taxed, frightened and conscripted collectively, alternately the storm troopers and the hostages, makers of shells for both sides, acting up to their principles against the pathetic and fraudulent stage scenery which they accept as real, the active and the passive material of all atrocities, infinitely pliable in the mass, an insane body composed of sane units—it is they who now and again come out of the sleepwalking trance to act sanely: the deserter, whatever his nationality, the man who malingers or the girl who hides him, the woman who fails to fuse a shell securely, the idiot who misdirects an escort. If one lives in a lunatic asylum, one has to know when to run, when to stand, when to dissemble. Every small particle of life these people manage to secure is a victory. Every moment of freedom from the gangs of Good Citizens burning to educate others by cutting their windpipes. It is because we cannot aid those members of this great sea of people whom the Great Axis Swindle is murdering without murdering others under the wheels of the Great Churchill Crusade Swindle or the Great World Revolution Swindle or even the Organized Parlour-Anarchism Swindle which Orwell exposed (Irving Albery is now quoting Kropotkin), that we do not support the war. If HORIZON can suggest any other logical attitude for us to take, we shall be glad to hear it.

ALEX COMFORT

THERE is no room to answer these letters at the length they deserve. The three Points which Mr. Woodcock makes I accept as a clear picture of what he means by anarchism, and I 'note' as bank managers say, that the anarchists 'regard democratic government as an impractical myth' and that 'the rôle of the anarchist is neither to legislate nor to lead, but to teach the people.' But in the one field where I have been able to observe anarchism at work, in Catalonia and on the Aragon front during the Spanish war, I have observed that the mystical élan by which the anarchists hoped to achieve spontaneous action and an ideological blossoming in which all would co-operate was inadequate to inspire the weaker to follow their example. In order to allow society to run itself on anarchist lines, the anarchists had to interfere almost as much as do the officers elected to govern by a liberal democracy, and by means which were more violent. In other words, whoever tries to get anything done by human beings, however willing, must in the end make use of the same process and that process is government. The anarchist militia could in theory leave the Aragon front whenever they chose, they need only fight in the battles which interested them, but in practice Durruti made it so unpleasant for them if they did, that they remained. Anarchism is a philosophy, a religion, a state of mind, but when it is applied collectively to practical affairs it must either borrow an existing form of government (in Spain it was syndicalism) which will make laws and fill prisons or expire in a series of revolutionary 'Beaux Gestes'. See Mr. Brennan's admirable and sympathetic chapters in *The Spanish Labyrinth*.

To deny that Hitler can be defeated by military means has always seemed to me the weakest point made by English anarchists, for his whole career goes to show that only military means have been of the slightest avail against him, and even nine million communists in his own country have not succeeded by any other. And because this is for the Empire an Imperialist war does not mean that it is not also for the workers a democratic one. The kind of war this is depends on the kind of peace it brings, and that is something public opinion will demand a say in. Most wars are more than one thing at a time and they are won by temporarily surrendering the freedom for which they are fought. In this war we have all marched up to the platform and handed our watches to the conjuror, I personally think that, if only through the vigilance of people like Mr. Woodcock, we will get them back.

Now there is no room for Alex Comfort. He asks for a logical attitude. Here it is. We all hate war, we are all tired of war. We agree with most of what Comfort says. But Hitler remains the real danger, our first duty to our principles is to put him out of the way, for if he triumphs then everything we stand for would cease to exist. Our second duty is then to decontaminate ourselves from the taint of Hitlerism which we have acquired. First destroy the mad dog, then go to the Pasteur Institute. Comfort argues 'First go to the Pasteur Institute—once you are bitten it will be too late.' But while we are there the mad dog is biting others (see 'Over the Water' in *HORIZON* last month) and so we are humanly bound to take the risk; to first kill the mad dog, then take our wounds to Dr. Comfort's surgery. Or to put it another way: A mass of men are fighting. They use blackjacks and Tommy guns and with their fingers gouge each other's eyes out. Many have villainous faces. 'Que

Barbaridad!' cries Mr. Comfort. But wait. Those men, who look so alike are in two groups. G-men fighting Mokey Mendoza's Purple Gang! 'All the worse that G-men can have sunk so low,' cries Mr. Comfort. 'I shall write to "Ends and Means" about it. Look at those two there. There is nothing to choose between them.'

But there is. Behind the G-men stands society with some kind of an idea of liberty, justice and decency; it's police are not perfect, yet they are not more corrupt or cruel than the system which employs them, and on the whole they make life easier for the weak. The Purple Gang, however, have held up civilization at the point of their guns, have blackmailed, tortured, victimized the innocent and will make short work of Connolly and Comfort. Surely we therefore must lend a hand against the Purple Gang and then set about getting eye-gouging abolished through 'the usual channels'.

Winning the war is proving easier than we expected two years ago. Winning the peace is proving more difficult; and we shall need all the lucidity and moral courage for this task that we can discover. It may well then be that HORIZON and Mr. Comfort will find themselves on the same side. CYRIL CONNOLLY

Dear Sir,

Mr. Ivor Jacobs, in his review of *New Roads*, with which incidentally I have no connection, suggests (1) that I have a 'hold on English publishing', and (2) that I am a 'smart Alec on the make'.

As to (1) I only wish it were true. As to (2) the implication may seem to be that the object of *English Story* is to amass profit for myself at the expense of my integrity and my writers. That also is not true and I don't even wish it were.

WOODROW WYATT

Dear Sir,

In his review of *New Road 1943*, Mr. Ivor Jacobs apologizes for its 'pomposness', but I should like to make a protest against its whole tone and spirit, which seems to me an attempt to suppress, by invoking a sort of bogey called 'Tradition', the perfectly honest and interesting work of quite young writers. What Miss Raine, herself a poet of distinction, has to say about her contemporaries is one thing, but Mr. Jacobs' sour and patronizing tone and his statement that the 'individual functions' of the poet and the critic 'have an equal importance' suggests to me a species of intellectualist tyranny which would confine all those unwilling to pronounce certain critical shibboleths in a sort of concentration camp.

Blake has been dead many years, but it is still fairly obvious that Urizen is still carrying on his police work in the world of imagination.

The University, Leeds

WILFRED R. CHILDE

THOSE readers who expressed doubts about the veracity of Koestler's 'Mixed Transport', are recommended to obtain *Terror in Europe* from 30 Maiden Lane, W.C.2, and read the reprint of the Polish eye-witness' broadcast on the Jewish Mass Executions.



JULIAN TREVELYAN. Lobster Pool. 1939-43



JULIAN TREVELYAN. Kiln firing at night. 1943

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The setting for *ON THE BEACH OF BONANZA*, on the other hand, is the world metropolis such as it existed until the outbreak of war. Here is the great city with its familiar contrasts of opulence and shabbiness, want and plenty, the demoralized ranks of the workless and the cunning ubiquitous middleman. It is a story partly realistic, partly satirical, and coloured throughout with fantastic overtones; and again it poses a metaphysical problem. The personal dilemma is the theme of the fourth story, and here a more elaborate symbolism is employed to describe the malaise of the psyche and the individual's efforts to escape from it. *ST. CUTHBERT* is pure legend, a dream of the Border country, enacted simultaneously in the dawn of our history and today. The concluding story, *ALONG THE COAST*, attempts a special kind of imaginative prose: the contemporary fable. Its style is deliberately formal, while the characters move through a magical landscape like cardboard silhouettes across a lighted screen. This is an allegory for the times.

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Rebecca rejoices. Exulting in her wealth and her wisdom, she flourishes her impressive blue feather. And she smiles in malicious ecstasy because now she has three souls to dominate instead of one. . . .

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